

Blood donors needed after East Coast storm: Red Cross

January 27 2016



(HealthDay)—Jonas, the massive snowstorm that hammered the East

Coast, has led to a shortage of blood products and there is an emergency need for both blood and platelet donors, the American Red Cross said Tuesday.

"The impact of this weekend's winter storm continues to affect multiple states along the East Coast, and more [blood drives](#) will likely be canceled. Right now, [blood](#) products are being distributed to hospitals as quickly as donations come in," the Red Cross said in a news release.

Since Jan. 1, severe winter weather has led to the cancellation of more than 300 blood drives in 20 states, resulting in about 9,500 fewer donations to an already low winter supply, the Red Cross noted.

Blood products can be transported where and when they are most needed, so donors in areas unaffected by the winter storm are encouraged to make blood and platelet donations, the Red Cross said. Donors in areas affected by the storm should donate only when travel is considered safe.

To make an appointment to donate blood or platelets, call 1-800-733-2767, download the Blood Donor App or go to the Red Cross website. At check-in, a blood donor card or driver's license and two other pieces of identification are required.

To be eligible to donate, people have to be age 17 or older (16-year-olds can donate with parental consent in some states), weigh at least 110 pounds, and be in generally good health. Donors age 18 and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

The Red Cross needs about 14,000 blood and platelet donations a day to meet the needs of patients at about 2,600 hospitals and transfusion centers across the country. The donated blood and platelets benefit a wide range of patients, including accident and burn victims, those having

heart surgery and organ transplants, and those being treated for leukemia, cancer or [sickle cell disease](#), the agency said.

More information: You can learn more about donating blood at the [American Red Cross](#).

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Citation: Blood donors needed after East Coast storm: Red Cross (2016, January 27) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2016-01-blood-donors-east-coast-storm.html>

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