

Canada reduces waiting period for gay men to donate blood

June 21 2016

Canada on Monday loosened requirements for gay men who want to donate blood, reducing the compulsory period of sexual abstinence from five years to one year.

Health Canada said it made the change after blood operators Canadian Blood Services and Hema-Quebec asked for the reduction and presented data showing that the new policy would not affect the safety of the [blood supply](#).

The new rule will take effect August 15.

The five-year waiting period to donate blood was imposed in 2013 and prior to that, gay men were not allowed to donate.

"The reduction of the lifetime deferral to a five-year deferral has not resulted in any increase in HIV positive blood donations," Health Canada said in a statement.

Other countries with a one-year deferral period for men who have sex with men include Australia, Britain, France, New Zealand, Scotland and the United States.

Health Minister Jane Philpott was quoted by broadcaster CBC as saying Justin Trudeau's Liberal government had an "incredible desire" to reduce the waiting period even further.

She noted that the latest policy "is not a radical change" from the previous rule and many [gay men](#) would still be banned from donating [blood](#).

"That being said, I would rather see Canada take a step in the right direction than stand still," Philpott said.

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