

Amid COVID-19 crisis, blood donor restrictions eased

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(HealthDay)—America is in urgent need of blood donations during the

COVID-19 pandemic, so the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said Thursday it will relax donor restrictions placed on gay and bisexual men and others.

Specifically, the FDA has changed the abstinence period required for gay and bisexual [blood](#) donors from 12 months to three months. The same abstinence relaxation also applies to women who have had sex with a gay or bisexual man and people who have had recent tattoos.

In addition, people who have traveled to areas where malaria is endemic can now donate blood after three months, not 12 months, the FDA said. These people can also donate blood without a deferral period as long as their blood has been treated with an FDA-approved pathogen reduction device. The FDA has also eliminated the waiting period for people who spent time in certain European countries or on [military bases](#) in Europe that might have put them at risk for Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease or variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

All these changes will remain in effect even after the pandemic is over, the agency says. Blood banks, however, are not required to comply with these changes.

The FDA is also encouraging people who have recovered from COVID-19 to donate blood. They are eligible to donate when they have been clear of symptoms for two weeks or more. And like most [respiratory viruses](#), there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be passed via blood. The primary concern is having the virus pass from person to person in a donor center. These centers are practicing social distancing to prevent people from catching the virus.

More information: [More Information](#)

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