

# Red cross issues blood shortage alert as summer heat cuts donations

August 7 2024, by Robin Foster

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This summer's blistering temperatures have helped prompt an emergency blood shortage, the American Red Cross has warned.

Heat waves affected almost 100 [blood drives](#) last month, either by hurting turnout or forcing the events to be canceled. Since July 1, the national blood supply has fallen by more than 25%, the organization said in a [news release](#).

Blood donations do tend to slow down during the summer because of travel and holidays, but the Red Cross noted that last month's extreme heat contributed to a shortfall of more than 19,000 [blood donations](#) in July.

Donated blood is used routinely during operations and childbirths. The Red Cross has said donations help save the lives of women with pregnancy complications, patients with traumatic injuries and people fighting cancer and blood disorders.

"Working with patients who critically need a [blood transfusion](#), I can't imagine blood not being available for someone I cared about and [who] needed it, especially a new mom or an infant that was needing a transfusion," Melissa Destross, a [registered nurse](#) in the labor and delivery unit at a hospital in Detroit, said in the Red Cross news release.

"I've seen moms in a hemorrhage situation, post-delivery, have massive blood transfusions, like blood losses over seven liters."

The Red Cross said type O blood is urgently needed. Type O blood is routinely in short supply because type O positive is the most common blood type, and type O negative is the universal blood type needed for emergency transfusions.

"Type O is especially important for people injured in accidents and other trauma who receive [emergency care](#)," Dr. Barry Siegfried, medical director of the Red Cross Michigan Region, said in the Red Cross news release. "Donors of all blood types can help ensure hospital shelves are

restocked to prevent patient care from being impacted."

**More information:** The American Red Cross has more on the [blood donation process](#).

People can donate blood by finding a local blood drive or making an appointment at a donation center (which can be found by visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](#) or calling 1-800-RED-CROSS).

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