

Apheresis comes from a Greek word and means “to take away” or “separate”. Apheresis is a procedure in which the components (platelets, plasma, and red blood cells) are separated from whole blood and collected, allowing the remaining blood components to be returned to you. Platelets are often given to cancer and leukemia patients to control or stop bleeding. Plasma is often given to patients with clotting factor deficiencies. Red blood cells are used to treat anemia, blood diseases, and accident victims.

Apheresis for the preparation of platelets, plasma, and/or red blood cells is a procedure wherein your blood is drawn into a centrifuge, using sterile, single-use tubing, in order to separate your whole blood into platelets, red blood cells, and plasma. While the appropriate component(s) is being collected, the remaining blood components will be returned to you through the same needle. Some white cells are collected during the procedure. The long-term effect of lymphocyte (white cells) reduction is unclear.

This blood returned to you will contain an anticoagulant solution (anticoagulant-citrate-dextrose, solution A), which prevents the blood from clotting. You may feel numbness, tingling of the fingers and/or around the mouth, or sensation of muscle vibration. These symptoms are due to the mixture of your blood with the anticoagulant solution which temporarily binds with some of the calcium in your body. Please inform us if you experience any of these symptoms. We will provide a calcium replacement to lessen the effect of the anticoagulant. Also, the blood is being returned to you at a temperature which is not as warm as your body temperature. If you feel chilled, please let us know and we may slow down the reinfusion of the blood and apply a blanket or a heating pad. The tubing sets are sterilized with ethylene oxide and, in rare cases, may cause donor reactions. Some donor reactions that have been previously reported for whole blood donations or automated collection procedures are anxiety, fever, headache, hyperventilation, hypotension, hypovolemia (decreased blood volume), pallor, a feeling of warmth, dizziness, light-headedness, nausea/vomiting, unpleasant taste sensations, urticaria, and allergic reactions. Other reactions, which may occur include: abdominal cramps, sweating, flushing, convulsions, chest pain, dyspnea, twitching, spasms, tetany, cardiac arrhythmias, excessive tiredness and difficulty in breathing which may indicate an air embolus. Please inform us if you do not feel well at any time.

Since platelets are more easily replaced by your body, you may donate them more often than plasma, red blood cells, or whole blood. Healthy donors replace the platelets and plasma removed in this procedure within 48 hours. Current regulations allow donors to donate platelets every 7 days up to 24 times a year; plasma every 28 days up to 13 times a year; a single red blood cell product every 8 weeks up to 6 times a year; and two red-cell products every 16 weeks. Based on above eligibility requirements and criteria, we may collect from you only platelets; platelets with plasma and/or red blood cells; only plasma; or up to 2 units of packed red blood cells with the infusion of up to 500 milliliters of saline.

The amount of blood the disposable kit holds at any one time is approximately one-half pint of blood. Since you are continually connected to the centrifuge containing your blood, you are assured that you are receiving only your blood in return. This procedure may take thirty minutes to two hours, depending on your platelet count, blood flow, height, weight, gender, size of your vein, and components being collected.

You will have limited movement of the elbow because of the needle in your arm. Following your donation of platelets/plasma/red cells, you may notice some stiffness in your arm (due to the time it was immobile) or you may feel a slight amount of tingling for about one-half hour after you are off the machine. You must leave your bandage on for four hours after donation to allow for proper coagulation at the needle site. If you notice any other symptoms or have questions, please do not hesitate to call us at the numbers listed on your Post Donation Information pamphlet.

I have read the information about and understand the apheresis procedure. I understand that I have the right to ask questions of and discuss the procedure with a physician.

All my questions have been answered and discussed with me, and I have been informed of the possible side effects. I also understand if I do not receive my red cells back that I may be deferred from donating again for 8 to 16 weeks.

I hereby authorize the withdrawal of my blood in such amounts as the attending physician deems necessary, and transfusion of my own anticoagulated blood back to me. I also authorize the attending blood center physician to determine any treatment necessary should I have a reaction during the procedure.

I am voluntarily donating my platelets, plasma and/or red cells with infusion of saline as appropriate and understand that I am free to withdraw from this program at any time.