

# Fainting: Advice for donors

**Please let us know if you feel unwell after giving blood by ringing the donor advice line on 0345 90 90 999. If you need immediate help contact your GP, NHS24 on 111 or your local A&E. In an emergency, phone 999.**

Most people who have felt unwell at a session are able to give blood again without any problems. Very occasionally, we will advise a donor not to give blood again after a faint. If you have any concerns or feel unwell after leaving the session, contact us for further advice on 0345 90 90 999.

We record when things go wrong with blood donation. We do this to improve our procedures and to make sure our donors are as safe as possible. We always investigate severe, unintended and unexpected complications of donation. We follow the Duty of Candour regulations and share our findings with anyone who has been affected.



**Thank you for giving blood. Most people are surprised by how quick and easy it is, but very occasionally donors may feel faint, dizzy or unwell during or after donation. Please follow these simple tips to help you stay well.**

## **Get ready**

Choose to give blood on a day when you feel relaxed and well rested. Avoid strenuous exercise on the day of donation. Get a good night's sleep the night before and give yourself plenty of time to avoid rushing.

In the three hours before you give blood, we suggest you eat something salty or savoury, and drink three glasses of water.

## **When you arrive**

Make yourself comfortable. Meet our friendly team who are available to help throughout the donation process. If you feel at all nervous or have any questions, let us know.

Please have a 500ml drink of water while you wait, as this will help prevent you from feeling faint.

## **While you give blood**

Muscle tensing exercises help maintain your blood pressure and can prevent you from feeling lightheaded.

Follow these simple illustrated exercises before the needle goes in or comes out, before getting up, or any time you feel unwell.

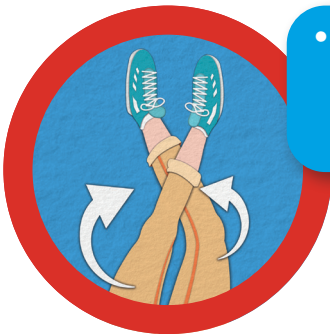


- Cross your right calf over your left calf.



- Squeeze your thighs together and tense your stomach.

- Point your toes back towards you.
- Hold this position for five seconds.
- Repeat this process five times.



- Now, cross your left calf over your right calf and repeat.

You can watch a video demonstrating these exercises at [scotblood.co.uk](http://scotblood.co.uk)

After a brief pinch, giving blood should not be painful. Tell us immediately if your arm is sore or if you feel unwell.

## All done? And relax!

Rest on the bed for at least three minutes after your donation is complete, then join us at our refreshments area for a snack and a drink. Take a break for at least five minutes.

Look after yourself for the rest of the day. Drink three glasses of water over the next three hours and eat regular meals. Avoid strenuous exercise, hazardous activities, prolonged standing or hot baths. Please avoid excess alcohol, as it will add to the effects of losing a unit of blood. For smokers, please don't smoke for two hours after giving blood.

## If you feel unwell

- Sit or lie down immediately. Try to lift your legs. If sitting, lower your head.
- Restart muscle tensing exercises.
- Ask a friend or relative to keep an eye on you.
- Wait for your symptoms to settle before getting up slowly.
- If you are driving, pull over, park immediately, and call for assistance.
- Do not drive if you feel unwell.

## Contact us

t: 0345 90 90 999

e: [nss.snbtSENquiry@nhs.scot](mailto:nss.snbtSENquiry@nhs.scot)

w: [scotblood.co.uk](http://scotblood.co.uk)



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