

# Donations Urgently Needed Now!



*New guidance from government entities recommends that people avoid gatherings. It is important to understand that blood drives are not gatherings. They are an essential health care activity.*

**Surely you have heard on the news about the area blood supply in this unprecedented time.**



We are a strong community who knows how to come together to help. Many of us are working from home and could use a break! If you are healthy and eligible, **consider venturing out to support a nationwide need to avoid adding one health crisis on top of another!**

*\*\*Got teenage kids in the house with you? Bring them! Ages 18 and older are welcome (17 with parent permission.)\*\**

Total time for whole-blood donations is about an hour. Snacks are provided.

**Please consider donating. Here are some local opportunities:**

## **Center Presbyterian Church Hall**

3/19 - 12:30-5:30 p.m.

3/21 - 7:30 a.m.- 2 p.m.

3/28 - 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

3/30 - 12:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Center Church Rd, McMurray

## **South Hills Donation Center**

The Manor Building

4701 Baptist Rd

[Click here for hours and details](#)

## **Texas Roadhouse**

3/29 - 12 - 5pm

311 Washington Rd, Washington

## **Phoenix Theater**

3/30 - 1-6pm

1025 Washington Pike, Bridgeville

## CANCELED BLOOD DRIVES, CORONAVIRUS FEARS SEVERELY IMPACT AREA BLOOD SUPPLY

**Healthy Donors Needed Now 'To Turn Out in Force' to Avoid Critical Shortage**

PITTSBURGH, PA March 18, 2020 – The fear of coronavirus is severely impacting the U.S. blood supply as Vitalant (formerly Central Blood Bank) and other blood centers across the country are struggling to maintain stable inventories and avoid a critical blood shortage. With school closures and business shutdowns, thousands of Vitalant's anticipated blood collections have disappeared—almost overnight. And that number continues to grow.

"The need for blood to support patients will continue unabated during this pandemic. Blood will still be needed for the care of patients with cancer, trauma, obstetrics, surgery and other populations. We are carefully optimizing the use of available blood in the hospital to take care of this precious resource. The decline in scheduled blood drives is expected to adversely affect the blood supply so we desperately need the community to continue to donate," said Dr. Darrell Triulzi, medical director, Vitalant Clinical Services and director, Division of Transfusion Medicine, Department of Pathology, UPMC.

**It's extremely important right now for healthy people to make a blood donation appointment by calling 877-25-VITAL (877-258-4825) or going online to [vitalant.org](http://vitalant.org).** Vitalant in Pittsburgh has expanded hours in its donation centers as listed [here](#).

New guidance from government entities recommend that people avoid gatherings. It is important to understand that blood drives are not gatherings: they are an "essential health care activity."

Joseph E. Kiss, M. D. Medical Director of Clinical Apheresis and Blood Services at Vitalant, assures the public that it is safe to donate blood. "Blood donors are carefully screened to ensure they are healthy, our staff follow rigorous disinfection protocols between donations, and we are fully engaged in public health recommendations for social distancing."

The U.S. government's leader on COVID-19 testing, Admiral Brett P. Giroir, M.D., Assistant Secretary for Health at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends "Healthy individuals should schedule an appointment to donate today to ensure that blood is available for those patients who need it."

"Our blood collection sites are a 'first response' action to this outbreak, versus a gathering that needs to be avoided," said Dr. Ralph Vassallo, Vitalant's chief medical and scientific officer. "If you're healthy, you're needed now more than ever. We cannot let it get to the point where there's no blood available for trauma patients, those undergoing cancer treatment and patients who need regular, ongoing blood transfusions just to survive."

"We need people to start turning out in force to give blood," said Peter Marks, M.D., Ph.D., director of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (the agency that regulates all U.S. blood centers). "We need it not to get to the point that surgeries are having to get canceled." [View Dr. Marks' comments.](#)

Sick people should not donate blood. Blood centers do not test for the Coronavirus. Blood centers have always required individuals to be in good health to donate, and the blood collection process follows policies established by the FDA to ensure the health and safety of donors and patients. Vitalant staff follow rigorous safety and disinfection protocols at its blood drives and donation centers. Giving blood has no impact on the donor's immune system.

Currently, all blood types and components are needed, with a critical need for platelets and type O blood donations. Platelets have a very short shelf life—only five days. Type O-negative blood is the universal blood type: ER doctors reach for it first to help stabilize patients before their blood type is known.

Vitalant continues to closely monitor the situation and will quickly implement any necessary changes as new information emerges from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and FDA.

### About Vitalant

**Vitalant ("Vee-TAL-ent")** is the nation's second largest community blood service provider, supplying comprehensive transfusion medicine services for nearly 1,000 hospitals and health care partners for patients in need across 40 states. Vitalant inspires local communities to serve the needs of others and transform lives through the selfless act of donating blood. Every day, almost 5,000 blood donations are needed to meet the needs of people throughout the country, and Vitalant's 800,000 donors supply 1.8 million donations a year. In addition to blood products, Vitalant offers customers transfusion services, medical consulting, quality guidance, ongoing education, research and more. For more information and to schedule a donation, visit [vitalant.org](http://vitalant.org) or call 877-25-VITAL (877-258-4825).

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