



American Red Cross

On June 8, the American Red Cross plans to implement changes to donor eligibility criteria announced earlier this spring by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in updated guidance for variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) or “mad cow,” malaria and human immunodeficiency virus.

In alignment with the updated FDA guidance, Recommendations to Reduce the Possible Risk of Transmission of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease and Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease by Blood and Blood Components, the Red Cross will change, and simplify, its deferrals for individuals who spent time in certain European countries or on military bases in Europe and were previously considered to have been exposed to a potential risk of transmission of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease or Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease.

- In alignment with new FDA guidelines, the Red Cross will keep in place indefinite deferral for the following individuals:
 - Donors who have spent three months or more cumulatively in the United Kingdom from 1980 to 1996.
 - Donors who have spent five years or more cumulatively in France or Ireland from 1980 to 2001.
 - Donors with a history of blood transfusion in the U.K., France or Ireland from 1980 to present.
- In alignment with new FDA guidelines due to the extremely low risk for transmission, **the following donors will no longer be indefinitely deferred:**
 - Donors previously deferred for geographic risk for time spent in other European countries
 - Donors previously deferred for time spent on U.S. military bases in Europe.
 - Donors previously deferred for use of bovine insulin

Individuals who would like to have their donor record updated contact our Red Cross Donor and Client Support Center at 1-866-236-3276 to do so.

The Red Cross will reduce deferral periods for transmission risks associated with HIV from 12 months to three months.

- Consistent with new FDA guidelines, donors who may be affected by this change include:
 - Male donors who would have been deferred for having sex with another man (MSM)
 - Female donors who would have been deferred for having sex with a man who had sex with another man
 - Donors with recent tattoos and piercings

The Red Cross will change its deferral period for travel to malaria endemic areas from 12 months to three months.

- During the health history process, the Red Cross will review a donor's travel destinations outside of the U.S. to determine if the donor has visited a malaria-risk area in the last three months.
- Individuals currently deferred with the Red Cross under this former policy will have their donor record updated by early fall to align with the new policy. If individuals would like to have their donor record updated prior to that time, we ask that they contact our Red Cross Donor and Client Support Center at 1-866-236-3276 for more immediate action.

We encourage individuals who believe they may now be eligible to give under the new FDA guidelines to visit RedCrossBlood.org to learn more about donor eligibility requirements that help ensure the safety of both blood donors and blood recipients.

- People may also contact our Red Cross Donor and Client Support Center at 1-866-236-3276 for information about donor eligibility.
- **It's important to emphasize that deferrals cannot be removed onsite at our blood drives.**