**Directed blood/platelets donation for Natalia Lepkowski** (surgery scheduled for July 28, 2020)

What is a directed donation?

A directed donation is the donation of blood or platelets that is designated for a specific patient. Donors cannot be tested for blood type prior to donation. If someone donates to a specific patient and we determine the blood is not compatible with that patient’s blood type, the blood will be released for use by other Memorial Sloan Kettering patients.

If the directed donation is whole blood, generally only the red cells are reserved for the designated patient’s use. The other blood components are put into the general inventory of Memorial Hospital’s blood bank for use by other patients.

To prevent blood from being wasted, if the designated patient does not use the red cells within 25 days, the unit will be made available for use by other patients. Platelets that are not used by a designated patient within 5 days will also be made available for use by other patients.

## It takes up to five business days to test and process blood donations and three business days to test and process platelets before the units can be released for use by patients. Therefore directed donations cannot be made for emergency transfusions.

Why should I donate blood/platelets?

Many cancer patients depend on blood and platelet transfusions to help them regain their strength, fight infections, and recover from cancer treatment. By donating your blood or platelets, you will be helping patients fight against their cancer. A healthy supply of blood and platelets is crucial for people with cancer, who need more blood products than people with any other type of illness.

Why do some cancer patients need platelets?

Some cancer treatments cause a loss of platelets. These specialized blood cells help control blood clotting. When platelet levels fall too low, patients may need a transfusion of platelets to replenish their supply and prevent life-threatening hemorrhages. Some patients, especially those who have had a bone marrow transplant or who are being treated for leukemia, may require daily platelet transfusions for several weeks.

Can you explain the blood donation process?

Donating blood takes about an hour from the time you arrive until you are ready to leave. First, you must complete a registration form with basic information such as your name, address, and birthdate. You must also present identification that shows your name and your photo or signature.

Then, one of our medical professionals will check your blood pressure, temperature, and hemoglobin level (iron); take a look at your arm to make sure it is clear of any signs of infection or intravenous drug use; and ask you confidential questions about your health to ensure that you are eligible to donate blood that day.

If this is the first time that you’re donating blood and/or platelets, you may want to review our [general donor guidelines](https://www.mskcc.org/about/get-involved/donating-blood/general-blood-platelet-donor-guidelines) and read our information about [other specific requirements](https://www.mskcc.org/about/get-involved/donating-blood/additional-donor-requirements) such as medicines that might affect your eligibility to be a donor and how [frequently you are allowed to donate](https://www.mskcc.org/about/get-involved/donating-blood/how-often-can-you-donate-blood).

Feel free to call us at 212-639-8177 with any additional questions you may have.

The actual donation takes between ten and 20 minutes. Afterward, you will be given juice and/or water to replenish the fluid donated and refresh you before you leave the Blood Donor Room. There are also cookies available for a snack.

What happens to the blood I donate?

All blood is tested for blood type, hepatitis, HIV (the AIDS virus), HTLV, and syphilis. Then it is separated into components — red blood cells and plasma — to help patients recover from cancer treatment and regain their strength.

What is different about donating platelets and how long does it take?

It is now easier, and in many cases faster, to donate platelets. Only one of your arms is used to withdraw blood, separate out the platelets, and return the rest of the blood to you. Your other arm is free to turn pages in a book, click on a laptop keyboard, or scratch an itch during the 70 to 90 minute donation procedure.

This is in addition to the time it takes you to complete your registration form and have your medical history taken and reviewed. Plan to spend about 2 1/2 hours in the Blood Donor Room when you are donating platelets.

Is it safe to donate platelets?

Yes, it is safe to donate platelets. All needles and supplies used to collect platelets are sterile, disposable, and used only once — for you — before being discarded.

Can I give whole blood and also be a platelet donor?

Yes. Donor eligibility criteria are the same for both platelet and whole blood donors. You can donate platelets 7 days after donating whole blood. If you donate platelets first, you can donate whole blood 7 days later.

**How do I make an appointment to donate blood or platelets?**

Call the Blood Donor Room at **212-639-7648****.**

**Where is the Blood Donor Room located?**

**Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center**
[Arnold and Marie Schwartz Cancer Research Building](https://www.mskcc.org/locations/directory/schwartz-research-building) Lobby
1250 First Avenue
(between 67th and 68th Streets)
New York, NY 10065

Bus - M15, M15-SBS, M66

Subway - Lexington Ave - Local (68 St.), BMT Q (72 St.)

Blood Donation Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8:30 am to 7:00 pm

Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm

Platelet Donation Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8:30 am to 6:00 pm

Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm

Parking

We offer donors vouchers for free parking for up to five hours at these garages:

* Somerset Garage 1365 York Avenue at 72nd Street
* Memorial Sloan Kettering’s Parking Garage East 66th Street between First and York Avenues

Who is eligible to give blood/platelets?

Donors must be in good general health, be 17 to 75 years old, and weigh at least 110 pounds, and show picture identification.

Answers to other common questions about the donation process, the difference between donating [blood](https://www.mskcc.org/about/get-involved/donating-blood/faqs-donating-blood-platelets/whole-blood-donations) and [platelets](https://www.mskcc.org/about/get-involved/donating-blood/faqs-donating-blood-platelets/platelet-donations), and [what happens to your donation](https://www.mskcc.org/about/get-involved/donating-blood/after-blood-donation) are available in our [FAQs](https://www.mskcc.org/about/get-involved/donating-blood/faqs-donating-blood-platelets) section at:

<https://www.mskcc.org/about/get-involved/donating-blood/general-blood-platelet-donor-guidelines>

<https://www.mskcc.org/about/get-involved/donating-blood/additional-donor-requirements/restrictions-related-international-travel-immigration>

**Thank you for your support and prayer**

Jaroslaw Lepkowski

Natalia’s father