Phlebotomizing (Donating Full blood) is often a practice done by men on testosterone replacement therapy (TRT) or other anabolic androgenic steroids to treat the effects of androgen induced erythrocytosis[1].

Testosteronology's pause point where we phlebotomize is a Hgb of 18 g/dL and a HCT 54%, in general. Different guidance is on a patient specific basis who have clotting disorders or other medical conditions.

The American Red Cross generally will not accept donations if Hgb is greater than 20 g/dL, other sites may have other practices.

Donations from patients taking certain medications are not accepted by the American Red Cross. These patients will require a medical phlebotomy waiver. Here are some examples of some of these meds that apply to testosteronology and why[2]:

1. Antibiotics (Abx) used for active infections: Some patients can develop skin and soft tissue infections (SSTIs) due to unsafe injection practices or receiving underground lab (UGL) steroids. The American red cross allows donation if you have taken your last day of Abx on that day for PO and 10 days if Abx by injection (IM/IV).

*Abx given for reasons other than infections are excluded from this restriction. Example: minocycline for acne.

Why? Risk of blood transmitted infections

2. Blood thinners: Warfarin, direct oral anticoagulants (DOACs) Eliquis, Xarelto,..etc), Lovenox, and Arixtra. 7 days for warfarin 2 days for other blood thinners.

Why? For the safety of the donor due to a risk of excessive bleeding.

3. Isotretinoin: Prescribed for acne. Must wait 1 month from the last dose

Why? Teratogenicity; Isotretinoin has a 20-35% estimated risk of teratogenicity and has many teratogenic effects including craniofacial, cardiovascular, and neurological defects in a fetus exposed in utero[3].

4 . 5 alpha reductase inhibitors: Prescribed for hair loss or BPH, (Proscar or Propecia) - 1 month & dutasteride (Avodart)- 6 months.

Why? Teratogenic - development of sex organs in a fetus unambiguous genitalia of the fetus. Abnormalities of the external genitalia in male fetuses[4].

5. HIV PrEp: 3 months after PO (Truvada/Descovy) and 2 years after IM (Apretude)

Why? Can make it harder to detect HIV in the sample.

6. ART therapy for HIV - cannot donate.

Why? Risk of transmitting HIV to recipient.

- Common misconception: ASA/P2Y12i (prasugrel, ticagelor, clopidogrel): no waiting period for full blood. Wait 14 days for clopidogrel (Plavix), 7 days for ticagelor (Brilinta) and 3 days for prasugrel (Effient), and 2 days for aspirin for donating platelets by aphresis

- Men who have sex with men (MSM): As of 8/7/2023, the American Red Cross eliminated questions based on sexual orientation to allow for a more inclusive process. The FDA statement guidance is unavailable on the day of typing this 4/13/2025.

For more information,[1] check American Red Cross criteria for eligibility Link below: https://www.redcrossblood.org/donate-blood/how-to-donate/eligibility-requirements/eligibility-criteria-alphabetical.html#:~:text=You%20must%20be%20at%20least,or%20limitations%20to%20your%20activities.

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[1] This guidance is authored by Omar Hajmousa, PharmD and reviewed by Thomas O'Connor, MD,PA. 4/20/2025