

Change is happening

Until September 2022, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals faced lifetime bans on blood and plasma donation due to a discriminatory policy from 1992, rooted in fears of HIV transmission. This policy excluded donors based on sexual orientation, perpetuating harmful stereotypes.

Since September 2022, sexual behaviour-based screening has replaced the blanket ban, asking all donors about their sexual activity regardless of gender or orientation.

While every donation undergoes rigorous testing for infections, there are limitations, such as the "window period" during which new infections may not be detectable. Screening questions help identify potential recent exposures to infections like HIV and Hepatitis C.

In May 2024, Canadian Blood Services formally apologized for the harm caused by the policy, acknowledging its impact on 2SLGBTQIA+ communities and committing to inclusivity.

CEO Dr. Graham Sher apologized on behalf of CBS leadership, addressing how the policy reinforced stigmas about the safety of blood from these communities.

Canadian Blood Services has since established a 2SLGBTQIA+ Advisory Committee to provide guidance and foster engagement, signaling a commitment to rebuilding trust and creating more inclusive policies and processes.

Flip this card over to learn more about the updates to blood donor eligibility criteria.



Learn more about eligibility

Canadian Blood Services allows trans donors to register in their gender but currently requires binary registration. Work is underway to support non-binary donors. pflag Canada is sharing information on updated donor criteria and advocating for more inclusive practices to reduce stigma and support 2SLGBTQIA+ donations.



What's changed?

Thanks to our community's advocacy, Canada's discriminatory blood donor policy has become more inclusive and continues to evolve. Since September 2022, screening is based on behavior, not identity—ensuring safety and equality.



What is sexual behaviour-based screening?

Sexual orientation is no longer a barrier to donating blood. All donors now answer the same behavior-based questions, ensuring fairness and inclusivity.



Is sexual behaviour-based screening more inclusive?

Donors are asked about recent sexual behaviour and those without new or multiple sexual partners in the last three months can donate. Others may need to wait three months to become eligible.



What about trans and gender-diverse people?

Trans and gender-diverse folks are welcome to donate. Currently the Give Blood app limits registration to binary gender identification. Canada Blood Services is working to add options for non-binary donors and chosen names in their system.



Learn more at [blood.ca](https://www.blood.ca)

