

Sickle Cell Trait and Blood, Organ and Tissue Donation: Yes You Can!



People with sickle cell trait can donate blood, organs, and tissues. Yet fear and commonly held misperceptions keep them from donating to those whose lives may very well depend on it. Education is needed to eliminate these myths and ease people's fears. Giving people the facts about blood, organ, and tissue donation can increase levels and frequency of donation, and, ultimately, save lives.



Below are answers to some commonly asked questions about blood, organ, and tissue donation.

Is it safe for people with sickle cell trait to donate blood?

Yes. If you have sickle cell trait, you are still able to donate blood. There is no evidence to suggest that donating blood causes any additional risk of harm or injury to people with sickle cell trait. Your medical history is more relevant in deciding whether you are eligible to donate blood than your having sickle cell trait. If you have concerns about whether you are able to donate blood, talk to your doctor.

If it is safe for people with sickle cell trait to donate blood, why do blood donation centers want to know if I have sickle cell trait when I donate blood?

Some blood donation centers may have rules about the specific parts of blood that they will take from people with sickle cell trait. This is largely due to an inability to filter different parts of the blood at certain blood donation/collection centers, and not due to concerns for the safety of the potential donor with sickle cell trait.

In addition, there may be circumstances in which the blood from a person with sickle cell trait should not be used for transfusion. For instance, if the recipient has sickle cell disease or certain medical conditions.

People with sickle cell trait interested in donating should contact their local blood donation center ahead of time to find out if there are rules on the specific parts of blood that they will accept.

Can I also register to be a tissue or organ donor if I have sickle cell trait?

Yes. People with sickle cell trait are able, and encouraged to register to be an organ and tissue donor. People should not feel that they are not able to donate based on age or any medical condition. Potential donors will be evaluated for suitability when the occasion arises.

For more information:

[AABB](http://www.aabb.org/pages/default.aspx) (<http://www.aabb.org/pages/default.aspx>)



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities

