

Blood donation.



It remains the case that gay and bisexual men are at much higher risk of contracting HIV than other groups. That means we need prevention and care services targeted specifically at us. It also means that some public services may treat us differently.

The NHS relies on volunteers to donate blood regularly to maintain supplies for its hospitals. For many years, gay and bisexual men were banned from donating blood in the UK. Although blood is tested before use, the long seroconversion process (the window period) means that recently-acquired HIV may not be detected. That ban has ended but the new policy may still cause confusion for gay and bisexual men.

NHS Blood Donation now welcomes donations from gay and bisexual men as long as we **have had the same partner for three or more months.**

This means that if we have had anal sex with a new partner or multiple partners in the previous three months, we are asked not to give blood.

If we are taking PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) or PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis), we cannot give blood until 3 months after stopping.

Oral sex (blow jobs/sucking) is not considered a high risk for HIV transmission.

LGB Alliance encourages gay and bisexual men who meet the above criteria to consider giving blood. Other criteria include:

- being generally fit and well
- aged between 17 and 65
- weighing between 50 and 158kg

LGB Alliance believes that recognising that gay and bisexual men are at the highest risk of contracting HIV is not discrimination and is essential to ending HIV transmission by 2030. There need to be specific services and support for gay and bisexual men. This goes hand-in-hand with asking us not to donate blood in the circumstances described above. While donating blood is not a right, being treated fairly and respectfully is. Let us know if you feel this is not happening.

NHS Blood Donation always records actual biological sex as this is extremely important in blood and organ donation. LGB Alliance believes this shows the importance of maintaining clear records of biological sex – which cannot change.

There are no restrictions on organ donation as there are sufficient processes in place to test before an organ is used.

Lesbians are not at high risk of contracting HIV and can continue to give blood. Lesbians were indeed specifically asked to donate blood during the height of the HIV/AIDS crisis.

All information on this page is based on official guidance and current law.

More information:

www.blood.co.uk/who-can-give-blood/men-who-have-sex-with-men/