

Blood banks face seasonal shortages, new screening rules

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(HealthDay)—There's typically a shortage of both blood and platelets

during the holiday season. But, tighter testing for a rare complication of transfusions makes the need for platelets even more urgent, experts at UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas say.

Platelets are a component of blood that are essential for clotting.

The complication, called transfusion-related [acute lung injury](#) (TRALI), is the leading cause of death due to transfusions, the experts said.

"One reason the supply of blood [platelets](#) has decreased is that we now have additional required testing of platelets after donation," said Dr. Thomas Froehlich, medical director at the Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Blood and platelet shortages are traditionally common during the holidays. The shortages put cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy, trauma victims and people with health issues that require routine transfusions at risk.

If you would like to donate blood, contact a blood center in your area for information.

More information: The American Red Cross provides more information on [blood facts and statistics](#).

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