



FDA Eases Blood Donation Rules for MSM

But people who use PrEP cannot donate.

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More gay and bisexual men will be able to donate blood now that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has ceased requiring men who have sex with men (MSM) to abstain from sex for three months before donating blood, according to an FDA press release.

Under the new policy, all potential donors will answer a questionnaire evaluating their individual risk, regardless of their sex or gender. Gay and bisexual men in monogamous relationships can now donate blood. According to the FDA, people who report the following will not be eligible to donate blood:

- Anyone who had a new sexual partner in the past three months
- Anyone with more than one sexual partner in the past three months
- Anyone who had anal sex in the past three months
- Anyone taking HIV medications to treat or prevent HIV, including pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP and PEP).

Regarding the rules based on PrEP, PEP and HIV meds, the FDA explains:

“Though these antiretroviral drugs are safe, effective and an important public health tool, the available data demonstrate that their use may delay detection of HIV by currently licensed screening tests for blood donations, which may potentially give false negative results. Although HIV is not transmitted sexually by individuals with undetectable viral levels, this does not apply to transfusion transmission of HIV because a blood transfusion is administered intravenously, and a transfusion involves a large volume of blood compared to exposure with sexual contact. As stated in the guidance, individuals should not stop taking their prescribed medications, including PrEP or PEP, in order to donate blood. The FDA remains committed to evaluating additional data and new technological developments as they become available to inform our donor eligibility recommendations.”

