

Tattoos and Blood donation

Statistics published recently indicate that about 20 percent of Americans between the ages of 18 and 50 have had tattooing of their bodies. Among the reasons for the popularity of the practice (besides the prominent displays by athletes and celebrities) is the vastly improved equipment used that allows intricate and creative patterns, and the safety of the procedure by the use of disposable needles and inks.

Historically, blood bank Standards have required a one year deferral period for individuals who had a tattoo. Given the safety profile and the high number of potential blood donors that are deferred by getting a tattoo, the subject has been revisited by blood bank professionals and government regulators. As a result of the discussions, a consensus has emerged that if the tattooing is performed in a regulated environment (i.e. in a licensed establishment, by a licensed practitioner) the one year deferral is not applicable. **Unfortunately, the State of Florida does not regulate or license establishments and individuals where “body art” is practiced. As a result, any prospective donor who had a tattoo made in the state of Florida must be deferred for blood donation for a year.** Once the activity becomes supervised and regulated state wide, blood banks can submit SOP changes to the Food & Drug Administration for approval to collect blood from individuals who have been tattooed within the prior twelve months.

The FDA is working on a guidance document regarding tattoo's.

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