

### **What is AB Platelet Pal?**

ABS Platelet Pals is specialty program offered by Atlanta Blood Services (ABS) to provide platelets for children at local hospitals. Children who have been involved in accidents or have serious life threatening diseases like cancer require transfusions of platelets for a variety of life-saving treatments.

### **Why is ABS Platelet Pals Important?**

As part of our immune system, our bodies use proteins called “antigens” and “antibodies” to fight off foreign entities such as diseases. Through this normal process we develop a defense system that circulates in the liquid portion of our blood system called plasma. This plasma is contained in platelet components that are transfused to patients. In adults, the small amount of plasma given with the platelet product does nothing, however in children; the antibodies contained in the plasma can cause harm. To avoid this we select platelet donors with specific blood types for children.

### **Why Ask Me to Join?**

Your specific blood type makes you the perfect candidate for the ABS Platelet Pals program. Children have a smaller body size that requires platelet transfusions from donors who have the same blood type. After you have completed your first donation with ABS your blood is typed and we are able to identify donors whose blood would be compatible to donate platelets for the need of our local children’s hospital.

Type AB is the universal platelet donor and is a very rare blood type that only 4% of the population has. Anyone can receive type AB platelets because people with type AB do not make antibodies against other blood types, this is why type AB platelets are considered the “universal platelet” and are ideal for treating child trauma victims.

Recent studies conducted by the military and large trauma hospitals demonstrate that platelet transfusions within the first few hours after trauma can significantly increase the chances of survival. Local children’s hospitals have adopted this practice and tailored it to meet the specific children’s needs. Many times blood type is unknown before the transfusion is started therefore having “universal platelets” type AB, on hand is important. Because we never know when someone is going to need a transfusion and time is an important factor, we require several donors per week to meet the constant need for type AB platelets.

Platelets from donors with other blood types are used for ongoing treatment of children with chronic illnesses such as cancer, leukemia, organ transplant, etc. These transfusions are called “type specific” because we know the patient’s blood type. By selecting donors with types other than type AB, we increase the supply of the type specific platelets and reserve the universal platelets for trauma situations.

### **Can you Commit to Helping Sick or Injured Children Here in our Community?**

Your blood type matches the needs of our children’s hospital here in Atlanta. We are currently looking for donors who are willing to commit to monthly platelet donations specifically for these children.

Can you commit to donating once a month? We ask that you commit to donate on a Tuesday or Wednesday one week out of the month. Other ABS Platelet Pals would also donate—either during the same week or on another week. This community support will help to pledge to our local children’s hospital that these platelet products are on the shelf when the child comes in.

**How can I join the ABS Platelet Pals Program?**

Please contact ABS at (404) 459-8744 today to speak with one of our staff members to be a part of the ABS Platelet Pals Program, helping to save the lives of local Atlanta children.