

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
MD ANDERSON
CANCER CENTER

**IF YOU WERE DEFERRED AS A BLOOD DONOR
BECAUSE OF TRAVEL TO THE UNITED KINGDOM AND EUROPE**

Your deferral is a result of a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommendation that anyone who travel to the countries indicated below and also spent more than the acceptable period should be deferred from donating blood.

- ☺ Traveled or lived in the U. K. countries for more than a combined total time of 3 months, from 1980 through 1996.
- ☺ Traveled or lived in European countries for more than a combined total time of 5 years, from 1980 to present.
- ☺ Resided at U. S. military bases in Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, and United Kingdom for a total time of 6 months or more from 1980 to 1990.
- ☺ Resided at U. S. military bases in Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Turkey for a total time of 6 months or more from 1980 to 1990.

We would like to reassure you however, that you should not be alarmed about your health, and we do not believe that it is necessary for you to see your doctor as a result of this deferral.

The FDA is taking a very conservative approach to make sure that an unusual and rare brain disease called "variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease" (vCJD) does not affect the U.S. blood supply. In fact, this travel deferral is an addition to other CJD deferral criteria that have been in place for many years.

Variant CJD is extremely rare, and has infected only a very small number of people, mostly from England or other parts of the UK (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Channel Island, and Isle of Mann) and some areas of Europe.. It is likely, but not yet proven that there is a connection between eating beef from cattle infected with a similar disease.

There is no evidence that travelers to the UK and Europe, even those who may have eaten beef while traveling there have become infected with vCJD. Scientists do not believe that vCJD can be transmitted through casual or even intimate (sexual) contact with an infected person. To date, there is no evidence that vCJD can be spread person-to-person by blood transfusions. However, until more research is done and conclusive evidence can be found regarding how vCJD is transmitted, the FDA is requiring this precaution.

Your deferral period is indefinite. We share your disappointment, but please know that, as new information about vCJD, or even a blood test, becomes available, it may be possible someday to reinstate you as a donor .

Thank you for your generous spirit. Your desire to save lives by donating blood makes all the difference for patients in need, and we are grateful to you.

U. T. M. D. Anderson Cancer Center Blood Bank, Houston, TX 713-792-7777