

PRESS RELEASE

Jehovah's Witnesses: Each Witness Now Decides Whether to Accept or Donate Main Blood Components

Position on whole blood transfusion unchanged

WARWICK, N.Y. (September 18, 2026) — The Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses announced on Friday that the decision to accept red cells, white cells, plasma or platelets from another person's blood is a matter of personal conscience. Likewise, each Witness must decide whether or not to donate blood for the clearly expressed purpose of providing components or fractions for use by another person.

The long-standing refusal of whole-blood transfusions on religious grounds, a core teaching based on the command to 'abstain from blood' (Acts 15:20), is unchanged.

"Blood remains sacred to Jehovah's Witnesses, who continue to regard life and blood as precious gifts from God," Paul Gillies, International Spokesman for Jehovah's Witnesses at their World Headquarters, said. "We recognize that medical decisions involving blood components are a matter of conscience between each Witness and their God, Jehovah."

The adjustment follows earlier updates on individual conscience regarding blood fractions and the use of one's own blood during medical procedures, which are not commented on in the Bible. That same reasoning has now been extended to the four main components.

Jehovah's Witnesses love life and want the best available medical care. They do not practice faith healing, and they seek out doctors who can provide effective treatment in accord with their wishes, values and beliefs.

"Congregations do not involve themselves in personal decisions that rest with the individual conscience. We will continue to respect and support the personal decisions of our fellow believers," Mr. Gillies said. "We are grateful, too, for the many skilled and compassionate physicians who provide quality medical care that respects our personal wishes regarding blood."

Jehovah's Witnesses number over nine million worldwide, in congregations across more than 200 lands.

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