



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
MD ANDERSON
CANCER CENTER
BLOOD BANK

TRAVEL DEFERRAL: vCJD

The U. S. Food and Drug Administration recommends that certain persons be deferred from blood donation because they have traveled to or resided in certain countries.

Time period	Country(ies)	Total Time Spent
1980-96	UK countries, including England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man, Channel Islands, Gibraltar or the Falkland Islands	3 months or more
1980-96	U.S. military bases in Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain or Turkey	6 months or more
1980-90	U.S. military bases in UK, Belgium, Germany or the Netherlands	6 months or more
1980 – current	Europe	5 years or more

If you have been deferred because of living or traveling in these countries, you should not be alarmed about your health. We do not believe it necessary for you to see your doctor as a result of this deferral.

The FDA has taken a very conservative approach to ensure that an unusual and very rare disease, variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD), does not affect the U.S. blood supply. vCJD is extremely rare and causes infection in persons who eat beef with the disease bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) or “Mad Cow Disease.” To date, the disease appears to be confined to residents of Europe, particularly England and other UK countries.

There is no evidence that travelers to the UK or other parts of Europe, even those who may have eaten beef while traveling there, have become infected. Even in infected persons, there is no evidence that the agent that causes vCJD can be spread via blood transfusion, by casual or sexual contact or through pregnancy. However, until more research is completed, the FDA is requiring this precautionary measure.

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