



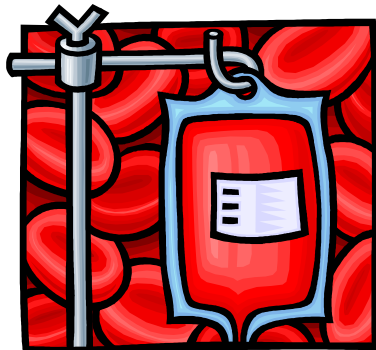
# Your Health Advocacy and Information Newsletter

January is National Blood Donor Month

January 2010

Start off the New Year right by donating blood to the Red Cross or your local blood bank in honor of National Blood Donor Month. The process only takes an hour of your time, and results in lifesaving platelets or pints of blood for those in need. All blood types are needed and with more traffic accidents happening during the winter season, clean backup blood is sparse this time of year.

The first month of the year has been recognized as National Blood Donor Month since 1970. According to the American Association of Blood Banks (AABB), every day in the U.S., approximately 39,000 units of blood are required in hospitals and emergency treatments facilities for patients with cancer and other diseases, for organ transplant recipients, and to help save the lives of accident victims.” The AABB works in conjunction with the American Red Cross and America’s Blood Centers to help those in need of blood, especially in harsh winter environments due to illness, accidents, and unforeseen weather conditions.



To donate blood, you must meet certain requirements. The most important is that you be at least 17 years old to give blood voluntarily, (although some states do consent at 16 with written parental consent). You must also weigh at least 110 pounds, and be healthy meaning without infection, not on antibiotics, without a fever, and generally feeling well on the day of donation. You may only donate if you have not given blood within 8 weeks. You can find the rest of the guidelines for donating blood [here](#) from the American Red Cross.

Teachers and students around the country can also benefit from blood donor month without even having to donate blood. Because elementary age students are unable to donate, donations centers offer classes and demonstrations on how a blood bank works including the different types of blood and the blood donation process, all while providing a community service and informative lesson plan for schools and home school families.

## Celebrating National Blood Donor Month

1. Donate blood and encourage others to do the same.
2. Talk to your kids about the ways that donating blood helps others.
3. Bake goodies for your local blood drive – the donors need to eat after they give blood.
4. Head to a nearby blood drive and thank the donors as they enter and leave.
5. Buy a blood donor t-shirt or make a donation to the Red Cross.

## The Actual Donation Process:

**Step 1 Registration:** Red Cross staff and volunteers will sign you in and go over basic eligibility and donation information. You will read information about donating blood, and will be asking to show a donor card, driver’s license, or other form(s) of I.D.

**Step 2 Mini-Physical:** You will answer some questions during a private and confidential interview about your health history and places you have traveled. Red Cross will check your temperature, pulse, blood pressure and hemoglobin level present in a sample of blood.



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**Step 3 The Donation:** The actual donation takes about 8-10 minutes, during which time you will be seated comfortably. The process is safe and sterile. Red Cross staff and volunteers will be available if you have any questions. Certain donating types, such as platelets, red cells or plasma can take up to two hours.

**Step 4 Refreshment:** After donating, you should have a snack and something to drink in the refreshments area. You can leave the site after 10-15 minutes and continue with your normal daily activities. Enjoy the feeling of accomplishment knowing that you have helped save lives.

#### **To Get Ready for Your Donation:**

**Make an Appointment** – It always helps to know in advance when you are coming in to make a donation.

**Hydrate** – Be sure to drink plenty of fluids the day of your donation.

**Wear Something Comfortable** – Wear clothing with sleeves that can easily be rolled up above the elbow.

**Maintain a Healthy Level of Iron in Your Diet Before Donating** – If possible, include iron-rich foods in your diet, especially in the weeks before your donation.

**Bring a List of Medications You Are Taking** – The Red Cross will need to know about any prescription and/or over the counter medications that may be in your system.

**Bring an ID** – Please bring either your donor card, driver's license, or two other forms of identification.

**Bring a Friend** – Bring along a friend so that you may both enjoy the benefits of giving blood.

**Relax!** – Blood donation is a simple and very safe procedure so there is nothing to worry about.

#### **Hosting a Blood Drive**

- Support your community
- Energize your employees by providing a convenient way to give back to the community
- Garner good will from inside and outside your organization by supporting the American Red Cross
- Join a 125-year strong movement of service
- Enjoy a partnership where everyone wins
- It feels good to be a part of helping to save lives

#### **What to Expect When Hosting a Blood Drive**

Hosting a blood drive with the Red Cross is a partnership. A Red Cross representative will work with you every step of the way to help make your drive a success:

#### **The Blood Drive Host:**

- Offers a suitable location
- Helps recruit donors within the organization and publicizes the drive
- Schedules donors for their appointments
- The Red Cross does the rest!

For more information on blood donation or to make an appointment to donate, visit the American Red Cross website at [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org).

