



A Not-For-Profit
Community-Supported
Blood Bank

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NEWS RELEASE

January is National Blood Donor Month NR#06-01

January is a perfect time to start thinking of others for 2006! In fact, it's never too early to start and a new year offers the chance to put helping others first as a resolution priority.

Since 1970, January has been recognized as National Blood Donor Month (NBDM). To help ensure an adequate blood supply, Suncoast Communities Blood Bank has joined with AABB (known as the American Association of Blood Banks) to stress the importance of donating blood. January is one of the most critical months for the blood bank because of a decline in donations due to seasonal illness, busyness, or apathy. The Blood Bank relies on volunteers to do something great for others—offer help and possibly hope to many people who rely on blood for survival. Donating blood could possibly be the greatest act of community service a person can offer. Suncoast Communities Blood Bank strongly encourages the community to visit a bloodmobile or a main location in January to help keep the blood supply adequate during this critical time.

According to Dr. Mark J. Magenheim, C.E.O. and Medical Director of the Suncoast Communities Blood Bank based in Sarasota, the need for blood is constant, and volunteer blood donors contribute to nearly all the blood used for patient care in the United States. "If all who are eligible to donate would do so on a regular basis (three to four times per year), blood needs could be met and shortages could become a thing of the past," he said. "Over 90% of blood collected in our communities is used locally, and we each need to be aware of this. We are in fact walking blood banks for each other each and every day."

EXAMPLES OF HOW BLOOD IS USED EVERYDAY:

Open Heart Surgery	can require 6-8 units (like "pints") of whole red blood cells
Hip Replacement Surgery	can require 8 units of red blood cells (that last only 42 days)
Cancer patients	can require up to 8 units of platelets per week. (Platelets only last 5-7 days and are essential for blood clotting).
Automobile Accidents	can require up to 50 units ("pints") of red blood cells
Trauma Accidents/Burns	often require 6 units or more of red blood cells or plasma
Leukemia Patients	require 100 units of platelets

INFORMATIONAL FACTS:

- Every two seconds someone in the U.S. needs blood.
- More than 38,000 blood donations are needed each day.
- Blood can be separated into at least three components: Red Blood Cells, Plasma, and Platelets.
- Just 1 blood donation can help save up to three lives.
- Sixty percent of the U.S. population is eligible to give, but only 5 percent of those eligible actually do.
- Blood and blood products are perishable. Donated red blood cells must be used within 42 days of collection
- During an emergency, blood must be on the shelf ready for transfusion in order to save lives.

FACTS ABOUT THE BLOOD DONATION PROCESS:

- To donate blood, a person must be at least 17 years of age, weigh at least 110 pounds and be in generally good health. People with Cardiac conditions or diabetes may still be eligible to donate
- Donating blood is a safe process. A sterile needle is used only once for each donor and is then discarded
- The actual blood donation typically takes less than 10-12 minutes. The entire process, from the time a person arrives to the time of leaving, takes about an hour.
- A healthy donor may donate blood every 56 days
- The average adult has about 10 to 12 pints of blood in his/her body. Approximately one pint is given during a donation.

Suncoast Communities Blood Bank is a 501(c) (3) not-for-profit organization that has served hospitals in Sarasota, Charlotte and DeSoto Counties for more than 56 years, as well as supplying the Bayflite Medical Helicopter for critical transport of trauma patients. For more information on how to take part in National Blood Donor Month, please call 941-954-1600 extension 240 or visit www.scbb.org.

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