



A Not-For-Profit
Community-Supported
Blood Bank

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NEWS RELEASE

Suncoast Communities Blood Bank helps with blood needs due to Hurricane Wilma; Platelets are needed this week locally
NR#05-24

In the wake of Hurricane Wilma, Suncoast Communities Blood Bank (SCBB) is stepping up to help fellow blood banks and hospitals in areas affected by Hurricane Wilma. SCBB is shipping platelets to Collier Regional Medical Center in Naples and red blood cells to Cape Fear Medical Center in North Carolina to meet special needs due to damage caused by Wilma. SCBB may be providing blood components to Broward and Miami-Dade Counties and other areas affected by Wilma this week as needed. SCBB strongly encourages people in Sarasota and DeSoto counties to donate blood this week, especially platelets, to help keep our community's supply at an adequate level. Our priority goal is to provide our community with an adequate and safe blood supply and then help other blood centers in need.

Platelets are blood components that help with clotting and they are used by cancer patients, burn victims, bone marrow transplant patients, open heart surgery patients, and even children dealing with different medical issues. Platelets last only five days after collection compared to whole red blood cells which last 42 days. Platelets are essential to survival, because without them a person would bleed to death.

Anyone who is currently a platelet donor and is eligible to donate must not use aspirin or aspirin-containing products 36 hours prior to donation. Donors may use Tylenol, Advil or Aleve for an aspirin substitute. Donors are also encouraged to drink plenty of fluids, especially water. Anyone interested in donating platelets may call 941-954-1600 extension 248 to set up an appointment. To find out more about how to make a blood donation or to learn more about platelets please visit www.scbb.org or call the main number at 941-954-1600 extension 240. New blood donors are always welcome.

SCBB is a member of AABB, the national blood, cell, and tissue therapy organization. The AABB Interorganizational Task Force on Domestic Disasters and Acts of Terrorism released information on Monday, October 24th that the U.S. blood supply is currently adequate to handle the demands resulting from Hurricane Wilma. However, the task force is concerned that future

blood supplies may dwindle because blood has a shelf life of only 42 days. The need for blood will be ongoing, especially over the next few weeks, as disaster victims require additional care. Again, people are encouraged to schedule appointments with Suncoast Communities Blood Bank or donate on a bloodmobile in the near future. Walk-ins are always welcome. Just one blood donation can help save up to three lives.

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