



TAYLOR TIDBITS

NATIONAL BLOOD DONOR MONTH

It's January and we are celebrating National Blood Donor Awareness Month. It's the perfect time to honor the people who help others through the simple act of giving blood.

Since 1970, January has been known as the National Blood Donor Month. It's a time when blood organizations like the American Red Cross pay tribute to the nearly 11 million people who give blood each year, and encourage others to start the New Year off right by coming to give the gift of life. First time and regular donors are encouraged to make a difference in their communities by giving blood every January and regularly thereafter.

Blood is traditionally in short supply during the winter months due to the holidays, travel schedules, inclement weather and illness. Regardless of the time of year, hospital patients nationwide need about 44,000 blood donations daily for cancer care, surgeries, and the treatment of serious diseases and trauma. A reduction in turnout can put our nation's and hospital's blood inventory at a critical low.

It is estimated every three seconds someone needs blood. In fact, one out of every three people will need it before the age of 72. That could mean you or a loved one. Unfortunately, less than 5% of the eligible population actually donates.

Healthy individuals 16 years or older and weighing at least 110 pounds are eligible to donate blood. Sixteen year olds must weigh at least 130 pounds and have signed parental consent. Donating blood is completely safe. In fact, there are benefits to giving blood regularly. Regular donations aid in decreasing iron in the body which leads to the decrease of free radicals in the body, something that may be involved in and possibly cause degenerative diseases. Each time a person gives blood, they get a free blood pressure check, diabetes check, glucose, pulse, hemoglobin check, as well as being checked for communicable diseases. All of these are free and a person is basically getting a free health check-up each time they donate blood.

Giving blood is not only beneficial to you physically, it is rewarding mentally and spiritually. Being a regular donor makes you feel a sense of accomplishment. Although you never know who will be getting your blood, you know that it will be someone who needs it. There is also the fact that the blood a person gives may be the blood that saves a member of their family.

REMEMBER: Just one pint of blood can help save up to three lives!!

Article Submitted By:
Judy Davidson, B.S., MT (ASCP)