

There's even the chance that your blood donation could help to save the life of a friend or relative!

Blood is the most precious gift anyone can give to another person. This is because safe blood saves lives and thousands of people would die every day if others did not donate their blood. In fact, a single blood donation can equal 3 or even 4 gifts of life as nearly every donation can be used for more than one patient!

Blood transfusions are given to:

- Patients undergoing surgery
- Patients with cancer or leukaemia
- Babies and children with severe anaemia
- Accident victims
- Women, to treat blood loss during childbirth

How? Being 16 or older means that you can join an elite group of people who realise the importance of blood donation – people who know that the act of donating blood could save the life of a fellow human being.

Donating blood is a commitment, no doubt about it! But it's a commitment that says great things about your values and the kind of person you are.

Where Do I Start?

First, discuss donating blood with your parents.

Then, ensure that you:

- Are over the age of 16
- Weigh at least 50kg
- Are in good health
- Lead a sexually safe lifestyle
- Consider your blood safe

The last two are the most important! The life of the person who receives blood depends on the honesty of the donors who've given their blood. There are several infections that can be transmitted by blood - Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Syphilis and HIV which leads to AIDS.

So ask yourself these questions and BE HONEST:

- Am I donating blood to receive a free HIV test? (You should only donate blood because you want to help someone who needs a transfusion.)
- Do I have AIDS or am I HIV positive? (HIV/AIDS poses a great risk to the safety of the South African blood supply. All donors must therefore meet certain requirements before donating.)
- Do I have longstanding swollen glands, weight loss, night sweats, a persistent cough or diarrhoea, white spots or blemishes in my mouth or unexplained blue or purple blotches under my skin?
- Have I had sex with or worked as a sex worker in the past 5 years?

© JumpStart 2007

The publication of JumpStart involves extensive research and substantial costs. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Publishers. Any person who carries out any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims.

Disclaimer

Whilst every care has been taken in creating this book, the Publishers do not give any warranty as to the completeness or accuracy of its contents nor of any supplementary information, explanation or opinion. Furthermore, the views expressed in JumpStart are not necessarily those of Deloitte. All advertisements and advertorials have been paid for and therefore do not carry any endorsement by the Publishers or Deloitte.

Donating blood takes only 30 minutes of your time, but could mean a lifetime to a patient in need. You can make a difference!

- Have I been treated for a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) in the past 5 years?
- Have I had more than one sex partner in the past 6 months?
- Have I had casual sex (sex with someone whose sexual background is unknown to me)?
- Have I had male-to-male sex in the past 5 years?
- Have I injected myself with any drugs or substances that weren't prescribed by a doctor?

If you can answer all of these questions with a "No!", it's likely that you'll be a safe blood donor. Just ask yourself one last time:

Would I want to receive the blood I am about to donate?

How Does The Blood Donation Process Work?

- Visit one of the satellite offices of the South African National Blood Service (SANBS) or attend a blood drive at your school, tertiary institution or workplace
- You'll be greeted by friendly staff who are there to help you and to explain the procedure
- Your weight will be checked and you'll be asked to read some info, after which you'll be given a questionnaire to complete and sign
- A drop of blood will be taken from your finger to check your iron level. Your blood pressure and pulse will also be checked.
- If all the requirements are met, you'll donate 1 unit of blood (480 ml) which your body will quickly replace
- Refreshments will be provided and you'll be encouraged to drink fluids after donating

What Else Do I Need To Know?

You can't get AIDS from donating blood! All needles and fingerprick lancets (used to test your iron level) are sterile and used only once. After use, each needle and lancet is placed in a special medical-waste container and burned. And all blood donations are collected by trained staff who follow very strict rules and processes.

Information courtesy of the South African National Blood Service
(SANBS) Tel: 0800 119 031 (toll free)
Web: www.sanbs.org.za

© JumpStart 2007

The publication of JumpStart involves extensive research and substantial costs. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Publishers. Any person who carries out any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims.

Disclaimer

Whilst every care has been taken in creating this book, the Publishers do not give any warranty as to the completeness or accuracy of its contents nor of any supplementary information, explanation or opinion. Furthermore, the views expressed in JumpStart are not necessarily those of Deloitte. All advertisements and advertorials have been paid for and therefore do not carry any endorsement by the Publishers or Deloitte.