

Saving A Life...One Drop At A Time

(NAPSA)—Three seconds—in the time it takes to read this sentence, someone will need blood. Although the supply of blood fluctuates, the need for it is constant. On any given day, patients in the United States need approximately 38,000 units of red blood cells.

“As a pathologist and a mother, I know just how important it is to donate blood,” said Hannah R. Krigman, M.D., FCAP, a pathologist in private practice in St. Louis, Mo. “Three years ago when I had my baby, I needed more than 30 units of blood products. I was very grateful that the blood was there. Donating is a safe and simple procedure that takes so little, yet gives so much.”

Pathologists, physicians who treat patients through medical testing to identify and diagnose diseases, also manage the blood inventory at hospitals, ensuring that it is safe for patients to use.


A single unit of blood donated by one person may be used to help several people, yet fewer than 5 percent of eligible, healthy Americans actually donate each year. To be eligible, donors must be in good health and be at least 17 years old. Most blood banks have no upper age restriction. Minimum weight requirements may vary depending upon where you donate, but 110 pounds is generally an accepted guideline.

There is no risk of spreading an infection from one donor to another through the donation process. Doctors and nurses use sterile, disposable needles for each new donor, and after a needle is used, it is destroyed.

“The blood supply is the safest it has ever been thanks in large part to safeguards, such as the conducting of health histories for every donor, the regular inspection of blood centers and the testing of all units of blood donated for infectious disease,” said Dr. Krigman.

Blood transfusions are often used to replace blood lost by

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- Whole blood can be donated every 8 weeks or 56 days.
- Other blood components, such as platelets or plasma, may be donated more frequently. 

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patients during traumas, such as car accidents. Blood platelets are given to patients with low platelet counts, such as those undergoing chemotherapy. Plasma is used to treat those who have clotting disorders.

If donating whole blood, you can donate every eight weeks or 56 days. Other blood components, such as platelets or plasma, may be donated more frequently.

American Red Cross Centers, America's Blood Centers and hospitals are just three of the many types of locations that accept blood donations. In addition, churches, businesses, colleges and community organizations often have blood drives.

The College of American Pathologists provides a free Internet-based service to help remind men and women to schedule their regular blood donations. Becoming a regular blood donor helps prevent blood shortages, especially in times of need such as during the summer months, holidays and natural disasters. Visiting www.MyHealthTestReminder.com allows you to select the day you would like to schedule your next blood donation. On the chosen date, you will receive an e-mail message reminding you to call your local blood donation center or hospital to schedule your appointment.

For more information about donating blood, visit the College of American Pathologists at www.cap.org.