

Blood donation – a few facts you should know

Blood is the basis of life in a human being. The average human body holds about 4-5 litres of blood. We lose enormous quantities of blood when affected by some diseases, accidents or surgery. A person may lose his life if 20-30% of blood is lost from his body and is not immediately replaced with more blood. The main components of blood are plasma, red corpuscles, white corpuscles and platelets. Depending upon the need, one or more of these components are infused into the patient's body.

The importance of blood donation

The body's functioning can only be normalized with more human blood in cases where substantial loss of blood has occurred due to accidents or surgery. But spare blood can only be preserved for a maximum of 35 days. Therefore voluntary blood donation becomes essential. A person is also compelled to receive blood donation in instances of excessive bleeding during delivery, platelet reducing diseases like the dengue fever, blood cancer and general deficiency of blood.

Are there people who should never donate blood?

People suffering from heart trouble, hypertension, diabetes, those undergoing treatment for mental disorders, patients suffering from epilepsy, cancer, liver disorders, carriers of hepatitis B/C and HIV/AIDS patients must not donate blood.

How often can a person donate blood?

Once every three months.

Are there any bad effects in donating blood?

Blood donation is a completely safe activity. One need not fear anything when donating blood through blood banks approved by the government. Since the body soon makes up for the

donated blood the donor does not feel any fatigue or other ill effects. In fact, blood donation encourages the body to manufacture new blood components fast. Only completely sterilized, germ-free needles are used for receiving blood donation. The donor, need only rest for a short period and have a light snack.

How can we ensure that the donated blood is safe?

- As far as possible accept blood donation only from voluntary donors.
- It may be dangerous to receive blood from professional donors.
- Infuse the donated blood to the patients only after making sure it is infection free.

Can a patient donate blood in advance before a surgery?

If the person is healthy, his own blood can be collected in advance, tested for purity and used during his surgery.

What are the advantages of donating ones own blood?

Ones own blood is the safest option. By using ones own blood chances of getting any infection or allergy are eliminated.

What should we do to ensure adequate supply of blood belonging to various groups in the blood bank?

Encourage voluntary blood donation.

Where can one donate blood?

One can donate blood at government approved blood banks. These blood banks have the facilities to collect blood from healthy donors, make the necessary tests, to build up a supply of good quality blood and supply it to patients according to their needs. At present there are 32 blood banks run by the government and 103 blood banks owned privately in the state. Besides there are blood storage centers, which have the facilities to collect and supply blood to hospitals

outside the urban limits.

What should one do to donate blood and to encourage it among others?

You can register your name with the 'blood donor forum' attached to your nearest hospital. Voluntary donors will be given special blood donor cards. Donors holding such cards are enabled to receive blood very easily, if the need arises.

What is a blood donor forum?

Blood donor forums are places in hospitals, offices, private establishments, clubs etc. where the names and addresses of prospective donors are collected and kept.