**Blood Donor Information**

Introduction— Blood is essential for transporting oxygen, nutrients, and other substances to tissues throughout the body. Donated blood can be lifesaving for individuals who have lost blood because of accidents or surgery, as well as for people who have become severely anemic or have dangerously low platelet counts because of certain medical conditions and/or treatments. Screening measures help to maximize safety of blood donation for the donor and the recipient.

**Medical evaluation** — In addition to a medical history, donors undergo a brief physical examination, blood pressure, heart rate and temperature before donation to check for any obvious signs of illness or conditions that would disqualify them from blood donation.

**Medical history interview** — All blood donors are asked questions about their medical history to help determine whether they can safely donate blood without experiencing any negative health effects. During the donation, one unit of blood (approximately 500 mL, or 17 fluid ounces) is removed.

**Heart and lung disease** — Potential donors are asked if they have ever had heart, lung, or blood diseases. In general, people with heart disease, heart valve conditions, irregular heartbeat, disease of the blood vessels in the brain, heart failure, and certain lung conditions are not allowed to donate blood unless this has been cleared with their healthcare provider.

**Other medical conditions** — Potential donors are asked if they feel healthy and well on the day of donation. Donors who have a fever, who do not feel well, or who are taking oral antibiotics are not permitted to donate blood.

**Seizures** — People with a history of seizures can donate blood, provided they have had no seizures within a certain period of time (usually one to six months)

**Recent surgery** — People who have undergone recent surgery are permitted to donate blood when healing is complete and they have resumed full activity. However, if a transfusion was given at the time of surgery, donation is not allowed for one year.

**Pregnancy** — Women who are pregnant are not permitted to donate blood during pregnancy and for six weeks after the pregnancy ends.

**Age requirement** — The minimum age for blood donation is 16 or 17 years, depending upon the state. When allowed, 16-year-olds must bring a signed permission form from a parent. In most cases, there is no upper age limit for donation, although approval from the donor's physician is required in some cases.

**Weight requirement** — Individuals weighing less than 50 kg (110 pounds) are usually not permitted to donate blood. The less a donor weighs, the greater the likelihood of having a reaction, such as dizziness and fainting following donations. Although reactions to blood donation are rare, individuals weighing between 50 and 54 kg (110 and 119 pounds) are most likely to experience reactions

**Cancer**- Donors who have had blood cancers (leukemia or lymphoma) are unable to donate blood, and individuals with anemia and hemoglobin levels that are too low are temporarily not permitted to donate blood.

Infections- People that have been exposed to or have HIV- human immunodeficiency virus, HCV- hepatitis C virus, HBV-hepatitis B virus, Malaria or bacterial infections are unable to donate.

Vaccinations & Medications- Recent vaccinations and some medications will have a time limit on when it is safe to donate blood.

Potential Complications of Blood Donation — Most people who donate blood do not have any complications that require medical care. The most common complications include bruising or soreness at the needle site and fatigue.

A small percentage (2 to 5 percent) of people feel faint and/or pass out before, during, or after donating blood. This is more common the first time a person donates and in people who are younger. Drinking a 16 ounce (473 mL) bottle of water before donating may reduce this risk.

Also have something to eat and drink immediately after donating blood and avoid strenuous activity.