

## DONATING BLOOD

Congratulations! So you're considering donating blood? Did you know one hour of your time and one unit of your blood can save up to 3 lives? There is no substitute for blood, it only comes from volunteer donors such as yourself. Expert medical care and advanced medical technology cannot save a patient in critical need of blood. Your blood donation is so important!

Here are some guidelines to help you to have a successful and rewarding blood donation experience.

### CAN I DONATE?

You will probably meet the medical requirements to donate blood if you are in good health, at least 17 years old and meet a minimum weight requirement of 110lbs or 16 years old with written parental consent and meet a minimum weight requirement of 120lbs. We often get asked what would prevent a potential donor from giving blood. There are some conditions that may prevent you from donating blood temporarily, while others may permanently exclude you from donating blood. Below are some of the reasons you may not be able to donate:

- ◆ Hemoglobin or Hematocrit level is below what's safe for you to spare a unit of blood (24hr deferral only)
- ◆ Blood pressure or pulse is too high or low (24hr deferral only)
- ◆ If you are under treatment for a variety of illnesses like cancer, heart disease or certain blood diseases
- ◆ Tattoos and body piercings from a non-licensed / non-regulated facility (if done in a licensed facility, the wait is only 30 days)
- ◆ Cold or flu
- ◆ Had a recent blood transfusion
- ◆ Hepatitis
- ◆ HIV / AIDS
- ◆ Certain international travel
- ◆ Organ / tissue transplants
- ◆ Pregnancy
- ◆ Sexually transmitted diseases
- ◆ If you are taking certain medications

*\*If you have any question about your eligibility please contact the Ochsner Blood Bank at (504) 842-3375 and please do not assume you cannot donate!*

### BEFORE YOU GO

- ◆ Thanks for deciding to donate blood! Before donating, be sure:
- ◆ To get a good night's sleep
- ◆ To eat a well-balanced meal
- ◆ To drink plenty of water, as hydration is very important
- ◆ To bring a valid government issued state I.D. (driver's license, passport, DMV I.D. card, etc.) or your school photo I.D.
- ◆ You are at least 17 years old (16 years old with written parental consent)
- ◆ You are in general good health

## **DONATING BLOOD**

### **AT THE BLOOD CENTER OR ON A MOBILE DRIVE**

#### **REGISTRATION**

Once you arrive at the blood center or blood drive, our staff will check you in and provide an overview of eligibility requirements and information on the blood donation process.

#### **DONOR HEALTH HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRE**

Complete the confidential questionnaire that will be provided, answering each question honestly and to the best of your knowledge.

#### **MINI PHYSICAL EXAMINATION**

Mini-physical Examination: Staff will check your blood pressure, temperature, pulse and hemoglobin levels (finger stick) to ensure your safety as a blood donor.

#### **DURING DONATION**

- ◆ The actual blood donation process (needle in your arm) will take about 5-15 minutes.
- ◆ Make sure to relax during this process.
- ◆ Try applied muscle tension during the donation - this simple technique consists of tightening the muscles of one region of your body, silently counting to five while contracting the muscles, then releasing the contraction and counting to five again.

#### **AFTER DONATION**

- ◆ Once the blood donation is complete, please wait for staff to assist you before attempting to rise from the donor chair.
- ◆ Follow staff instructions and proceed to the refreshment area for water and snacks.
- ◆ Drink plenty of water to ensure proper hydration and remain in the refreshment area for at least 15 minutes. Although rare, most reactions occur within 15 minutes of your donation.
- ◆ Make sure the next meal you eat is healthy and well-balanced.
- ◆ Follow the blood center's additional instructions on how to take care of yourself after your donation.
- ◆ Do not smoke.
- ◆ Now that you're finished, don't forget to schedule your next blood donation.

Thank you for donating! Enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that you helped save a life today!

# **GIVE THE GIFT OF LIFE!**