

American Red Cross National Blood Supply Drops to Critically Low Levels

Written by Theresa Kuhlmann
Monday, 11 July 2011 13:38

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All eligible blood donors asked to make and keep appointments

PEORIA, Ill. (July 11, 2011) – Due to a critical shortage of donated blood across the nation, the American Red Cross – the single largest supplier of blood products in the United States – is asking eligible donors of all blood types to make an appointment to give blood as soon as possible.

With many donors busy or traveling, and with school out of session where up to 20 percent of donations are made during the academic year, donations have dropped dramatically. In fact, during May and June 2011, while the need for blood products remained steady, donations were at the lowest level the Red Cross has experienced in more than 12 years.

The Red Cross needs blood donors – now more than ever – to roll up a sleeve and give as soon as possible. All blood types are needed, but especially O negative, B negative and A negative. Call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit redcrossblood.org to make an appointment or for more information.

The American Red Cross has responded to more than 40 major disasters in over 30 states during the past three months – delivering help and hope to people affected by floods, tornadoes

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and wildfires. But there's another, more personal, kind of disaster which can happen to any of us at any time if we need blood and it's not available.

"As a physician, I have seen firsthand how blood transfusions can truly help save lives," said David C. Mair, M.D., chief medical officer of the Mid-America Blood Services Division of the American Red Cross which provides blood products and specialized laboratory services to more than 326 hospitals in the Midwest and central U.S. "However, a critical blood shortage like the one we're experiencing right now could have a devastating effect on patients whose survival may depend on blood being there when and where needed. Blood donors can help ensure a readily available blood supply locally as well as throughout the country."

A year and a half ago, 15 year old Cora Peters of Princeton, Illinois was diagnosed with stage 4 synovial sarcoma. Since her diagnosis, Cora has gone through three surgeries and countless lifesaving blood product transfusions to replace the blood cells that her body was no longer able to make.

Cora's story highlights the importance of each and every blood donation. Because of that, the Red Cross is reaching out to eligible blood donors, sponsors and community leaders to ask them to recruit blood donors to help meet the needs of patients in communities across the United States.

A blood donor card or driver's license, or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age (16 with parental permission in some states), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

About the American Red Cross

Governed by volunteers and supported by giving individuals and communities, the American

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Red Cross is the single largest supplier of blood products to hospitals throughout the United States. While local hospital needs are always met first, the Red Cross also helps ensure no patient goes without blood no matter where or when they need it. In addition to providing nearly half of the nation's blood supply, the Red Cross provides relief to victims of disaster, trains millions in lifesaving skills, serves as a communication link between U.S. military members and their families, and assists victims of international disasters or conflicts.

Upcoming Blood Donation Opportunities

ROCK ISLAND COUNTY

7/11/2011, 11:00 am- 4:00 pm, DHL Global Forwarding, 3100 69th Ave #2, Moline

WHITESIDE COUNTY

7/12/2011, 1:00 pm- 5:15 pm, Old Fulton Fire Station, 912 4th Street, Fulton, IL, Whiteside

7/13/2011, 10:00 am- 2:00 pm, Rock Falls Blood Donation Center, 112 W. Second St., Rock Falls, , IL, Whiteside

7/14/2011, 3:00 pm- 8:00 pm, Fairfield Amish Mennonite School, 29467 425 E. Street, Tampico, , IL, Whiteside

7/15/2011, 11:30 am- 6:00 pm, Sterling National Manufacturing Education Center, 1 First Avenue, Sterling, , IL, Whiteside

7/16/2011, 9:00 am- 1:00 pm, Culver's, 1901 Harley Davidson Drive, Rock Falls, IL, Whiteside

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7/16/2011, 10:00 am- 2:00 pm, Army National Guard, 716 Sixth Ave, Rock Falls, IL, Whiteside