



Oklahoma Blood Institute

TRANSFUSION TRIBUNE

3rd Quarter, 2009

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BLOOD DONATION

The summer season is always a time when blood donations are down because people are involved in other activities. Blood donors are needed year-round to provide products for patients undergoing chemotherapy, patients with sickle cell anemia, and in order to be prepared for unpredictable disasters and traumas. This edition will discuss the importance of blood donations and provide general information about donating blood.

Who Can Donate Blood?

Almost all healthy adults and older teenagers \geq 17 years old are eligible to donate. Potential donors must weigh \geq 110 lbs and feel healthy on the day of donation. Currently only about 5% of the eligible population in the United States actually donate blood. All of the blood collected by OBI is obtained from volunteer donors.

Where Do Donations Occur?

OBI has several blood donation centers located conveniently around the state. Many opportunities to donate at a mobile blood drive such as at a church, school, or other locations are available. Check www.obi.org to find out where you can donate.

What Happens At Donation?

Potential donors will be given materials to read about the importance of a safe blood supply and high risk behaviors. They will be asked to fill out a questionnaire about their general health and general well being. The questions are designed to help protect both the donor and the recipient from harm. Some questions will be about any medical conditions they may have which would exclude them from donating, as well as what medications they may be taking. Donors being treated with antibiotics for an infectious process are excluded from donating. An abbreviated physical exam will be done, which will consist of taking the donor's blood pressure, pulse, tem

perature, and checking their hemoglobin concentration (>12.5 g/d). Please bring a photo ID as all donors are required to present an ID before donating.

How Long Does It Take?

Donating a traditional unit of whole blood usually takes about 30 minutes. Special donations utilizing apheresis technology can take over an hour (plateletpheresis donations.) OBI staff can provide more information about apheresis donation. Information is also available on OBI's website.

Is It Safe To Donate?

Yes, all donation needles, tubing, and bags are sterile and are used only once. There is no risk of getting infectious diseases from donating blood. A small number of donors will experience bruising at the needle site. Mild reactions can occur during donation and are usually vasovagal. Common symptoms include lightheadedness, nausea, and anxiety. Severe reactions rarely occur. If a reaction occurs, medical personnel may place the patient in "Trendelenburg Position" and place cold compresses on the patient's forehead. After donation, patients are asked to stay at the donor site for a short time where they are given a snack and allowed to sit and relax. Donors should not do any heavy lifting or excessive physical exertion for several hours after donation.

How Can I Prepare to Donate?

Make sure you are well hydrated before donating. Water and other beverages are available at all Oklahoma Blood Institute donor locations. These are available for donors prior to donating. We also recommend that eating a well balanced meal within four hours of donating is ideal. Eating and drinking prior to donating helps decrease the incidence of donor reactions.

References:

-*Standards for Blood Banks and Transfusion Services*, AABB, 25th edition. Bethesda, MD. 2008
-AABB website at www.aabb.org