

# Winter Brings Increased Need For Blood And Plasma Donors

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O'FALLON –Someone needs blood or a blood product every two seconds in the United States, and one out of every seven people who enter a hospital will need a blood product, according to America's Blood Centers (ABC).

After the holiday season of giving, the ABC says blood and plasma donations become scarce. In a hospital setting this can mean patients in a wide range of circumstances can be limited in how much blood they receive.

HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital Laboratory Director Justin Cox says January's Blood Donor Awareness Month is an important time to educate the public about the many benefits of being a blood or plasma donor, whether it's once or on a regular basis, and to raise awareness around the current critically low supply level.

"Donations are important because we do not have an alternative for blood or platelets; they cannot be manufactured," said Cox. "Hospitals use blood every single day to help patients. We want to ensure supply is available for you or a loved one should you need it."

According to Kirby Winn, public relations manager at ImpactLife, "We strive to collect an average of 3600 donations on a weekly basis. In recent weeks, however, the donation rate has ranged from 2500 to 2800 donations per week. Blood products are perishable and must be used for transfusion within a short window of time, so we strive to keep a 5-day supply in our inventories to meet anticipated and unanticipated needs. Unfortunately, most blood products and types are at a less than 3-day supply."

ImpactLife is the local blood provider for 126 hospitals in Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, and Wisconsin, including St. Elizabeth's.

Blood transfusions can be necessary for serious injuries, surgeries, childbirth, blood disorders, anemia, and many other conditions and situations. Plasma donations can be vital for patients with liver failure, severe infections, and serious burns.

St. Elizabeth's hosts blood drives on a regular basis. To schedule an appointment, go to [www.bloodcenter.org/group](http://www.bloodcenter.org/group) and use code 10155 or call 800-747-5401. Drive dates for 2022 are as follows:

- February 1
- April 5
- June 7
- August 9
- October 11
- December 13, 2022

Here are four top reasons to consider making a life-saving blood donation part of your new year:

- A donation can save a life, or several lives if your blood is separated into its components – red cells, platelets and plasma
- Only 10% of eligible donors donate despite it being a safe and regulated process by the Food and Drug Administration and the American Association of Blood Banks

- By donating, you get a free blood test as your donation is checked for infectious diseases and you are notified immediately if there are concerns.
- Blood donation can improve your overall health; Research shows blood donors are 88 percent less likely than others to suffer a heart attack

ImpactLife guidelines for donor eligibility in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Do not give blood if:

- You have a fever, cough, or shortness of breath.
- You have been diagnosed with COVID-19 UNTIL 10 days after your recovery (no fever, cough, or other respiratory symptoms and not need for oxygen).
- You are waiting for a test result for COVID-19. If it is negative and you are well you may donate. If it is positive, you must wait 10 days from your testing date and be well.
- In the last 10 days you have been within six feet of someone who has the virus or is being tested for the virus for greater than 15 minutes without use of personal protective equipment UNLESS you meet the following vaccination criteria: Vaccination Criteria-You are ELIIBLE to donate if exposure to COVID-19 occurred two weeks after receiving the last dose COVID-19 vaccine series (Moderna, Pfizer or Johnson & Johnson).

For more information about how to save and improve quality of life for those in need of blood and plasma, visit ImpactLife at [www.bloodcenter.org](http://www.bloodcenter.org).

## **About Hospital Sisters Health System**

Hospital Sisters Health System's (HSHS) mission is to reveal and embody Christ's healing love for all people through our high-quality Franciscan health care ministry. HSHS provides state-of-the-art health care to our patients and is dedicated to serving all people, especially the most vulnerable, at each of our physician practices and 15 local hospitals in two states – Illinois (Breese, Decatur, Effingham, Greenville, Highland, Litchfield, O'Fallon, Shelbyville and Springfield) and Wisconsin (Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire, Oconto Falls, Sheboygan and two in Green Bay). HSHS is sponsored by Hospital Sisters Ministries, and Hospital Sisters of St. Francis is the founding institute. For more information about HSHS, visit [www.hshs.org](http://www.hshs.org). For more information about Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, visit [www.hospitalsisters.org](http://www.hospitalsisters.org).