**World Blood Donor Day 2018: What You Need To Learn and Unlearn**

Every 14th June, countries around the world celebrate World Blood Day. The host country for World Blood Donor Day 2018 events is Greece. This event serves to create more awareness on the importance and need for blood donation and to thank voluntary donors for their priceless donations. The theme of this year is ‘Be there for someone else. Give blood. Share life’

Blood donation occurs basically when a person voluntarily has his or her blood drawn and used for transfusions. These transfusion of blood helps save millions of lives every year and patients suffering from life-threatening condition like cancers. At point of transfusion, 350ml of blood is drawn and stored in plastic bags containing anti-coagulants; this makes up one unit of blood.

**Health benefits of blood donation**

Blood donation not only adds value to the life of the receiver but also does same to the life of the donor. These benefits include;

**Anti-cancer benefits**

Blood donation helps in lowering the risk of cancer. By donating blood the iron stores in the body are maintained at healthy levels. A reduction in the iron level in the body is linked with low cancer risk.

**Stimulates Blood Cell Production**

After donating blood, the body works to replenish the blood loss. This stimulates the production of new blood cells, in turn helps in maintaining good health.

**Weight loss**

Regular blood donation reduces the weight of the donors. This is helpful for those who are obese and are at a higher risk of cardiovascular diseases and other health disorders. Consult your doctor before donating blood to avoid health issues

**Maintains Healthy Heart & Liver**

Blood donation helps in reducing the risk of heart and liver caused by the iron overload in the body. Intake of iron-rich diet may increase the iron levels in the body and since only limited proportions can be absorbed, excess iron gets stored in the heart, liver and pancreas which in turn increases the risk of liver cirrhosis, liver failure, heart abnormalities e.t.c. Blood donation helps in maintaining the iron levels and reduces the risk of various health ailments.

**How do I know that I’m eligible to donate blood?**

* Donors must be fit and healthy
* Weighs between 50-160kg
* Must be 17-66years of age. Donors over 70years can if they have donated blood in the last two years.
* Men can give blood every 12weeks; for women every 16weeks

**Myths and Facts of Blood donation**

Still have reservations about blood donations, keep reading while been clarified

1. **Myth: I only have limited amount of blood and taking blood away from the body is bad**

**Fact**: On an average, your body contains 10 pints of blood and at the point of donation only one pint is drawn and your body keeps on producing blood and replenishes blood quickly after you’ve donated.

1. **Myth: I have high/low blood pressure**

**Fact:** if you tend to have low blood pressure, it is fine to donate blood as long as you feel fine at the time of donation and your blood pressure is at least 100/60. If you have high blood pressure, you are fine to donate, as long as your blood pressure is no higher than 150/100. Medications for high blood pressure should also not prohibit you from donating, but you will be informed in advance, if you are not a suitable candidate.

1. **Myth: I am sacred of needles and it will hurt**

**Fact:** the needle used for blood donations is the same size of the needle used when you draw a vial of blood for medical tests. It’s only a small prick, even though the needle remains in your arm for longer. If you can tolerate normal injections, you will be able to handle a blood donation.

1. **Myth: Smokers cannot be blood donors**

**Fact:** you can donate even if you are a smoker, although you have to avoid smoking for three hours after donating blood and also stay away from alcohol for 24hours.

1. **Myth: Persons with tattoos and body piercings cannot donate blood**

**Fact:** you can only donate blood if your tattoo or piercings are a year older or more. Introducing ink, metal or any foreign material into your body affects your immune system and may expose you to harmful viruses, this can affect what’s in your bloodstream, especially if you got your tattoo in a place of questionable safe practices. If you’ve contracted a blood borne illness, detectable antibodies will likely appear during this yearlong window.

**NOTE:** It is important to consult your doctor before donating blood if there are any health issues or concerns. It is always good to have a healthy diet weeks before and on the day of donation, make sure you are well hydrated.

Still have reservations about blood donation, comment below while I clarify you more

Remember, be there for someone else. Give blood. Share life.