

## 9 What is the procedure for donating blood?

The donor's main aim should only be to help patients. A Maltese ID Card, or driving licence or passport must always be presented at registration. Eligible donors must have sufficient body weight. The haemoglobin\* level is checked from a drop of blood taken from one's finger, and body temperature is measured. A medical check-up ensues, where the doctor in charge determines whether one is fit to donate blood.

## 10 Who is eligible to donate blood?

Persons from the age of 17 till their 68th birthday may donate, though youths below the age of 18 must have a signed parental consent form (may be downloaded from the web site indicated overleaf). Donors between their 66th and 68th birthday are only allowed to donate if they were registered donors before they turned 66. Also, between the ages of 66 and 67, donations can be made every three months; however, should a one year gap between donations be exceeded, the donor will no longer be allowed to donate.

## 11 How often may one donate blood?

Males may donate every three months; menstruating females may donate every four months. This is reduced to three months following menopause.

## 12 When is one not allowed to donate blood?

It is not permitted to donate blood when one's health is at risk, for example when the haemoglobin\* level is low. Moreover, blood donation is not permitted when the donor has

13 recently suffered from any infection, or is taking certain medication/s by prescription, as this puts the patients' health at risk.

### Are all persons taking medication not allowed to donate blood?

Not necessarily, for example females taking any contraceptive pill or are on HRT are allowed to give blood. Diabetics on oral medication and who do not have complications are usually allowed to donate blood. People on insulin however, are not allowed to donate. Under a new regulation there are also instances when those taking medication for high cholesterol or for high blood pressure may be allowed to donate, provided that the prescribed dose is stable and that they are following regular treatment.

\*an iron containing protein that gives the blood its characteristic red colour.

**Web:** [www.blood.gov.mt](http://www.blood.gov.mt)

**Email:** [customer-care.nbts@gov.mt](mailto:customer-care.nbts@gov.mt)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/bloodmalta](http://www.facebook.com/bloodmalta)

#### Blood Donation Centre, G'Mangia:

Mon - Sun 08:00 - 18:00, including Public Holidays.

**Tel:** 21234767 / 79307307 - general, during opening hours

**Tel:** 22066201 - reception

#### Xewkija Berġa:

on alternate Sundays 08:00 - 13:00,

and alternate Tuesdays 13:00 - 17:00.

SMS's are issued to all Gozo Residents.

**Tel:** 21556461



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wish to  
become a  
**Blood Donor**

Information  
Leaflet

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## 1 What is blood?

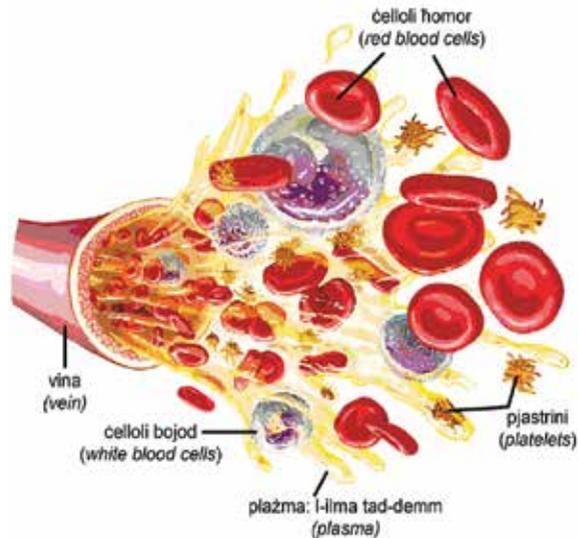
Blood is intrinsically an organ which forms part of the body circulation system. It feeds the body and organs with oxygen and nutrients that are essential for survival.

## 2 What does it consist of?

It is made up of liquid and cellular components. The clear liquid component is called plasma. The cellular part is comprised of mainly red and white cells, together with smaller cells called platelets. These cells circulate in the plasma.

## 3 How much blood circulates through our body?

One kilo of human tissue contains approximately 70ml of blood. For example, a person weighing 70 kilos would have five litres of blood, whereas a baby weighing five kilos would have half a litre of blood circulating through the baby's veins.



## 4 What is donated blood used for?

Supplies of blood donations are crucial in the support of a wide range of medical conditions. Blood donation is vital throughout the treatment of babies and young children from NPICU wards (formerly SCBU). Blood supplies are administered immediately to women who have lost blood during or immediately following childbirth. Children, youths and adults suffering from cancer depend on blood and blood products throughout their treatment. Substantial blood supplies are needed during major operations, such as heart, thyroid, orthopaedic surgery, and other medical interventions. Above all, blood supplies are always urgently required for the victims of traffic accidents and accidents at the work place.



## 5 Is my health affected in any way when I donate blood?

No, your health will not be affected. Prior to each blood donation a medical check-up is carried out which determines whether a person is fit enough and eligible to donate blood. Nevertheless, irrespective of one's physical fitness and wellbeing at the time of blood donation, following the procedure a person is firmly advised not to do any physical exertion or carry heavy weights on that day. Lack of caution could result in general weakness or bruising on the arm.

## 6 Can I eat and drink before giving blood?

Before donating blood, it is essential to drink a minimum of half a litre of water. If you come in the morning make sure you have had a good breakfast; if you come in the afternoon it is important not to donate blood immediately following a heavy meal. On the day you come to donate, avoid eating fatty food such as *pastizzi* or fried food. This is because fats in the circulatory system would adversely affect the quality of the blood samples used for screening and ultimately affect the final blood products. It is also not advised to donate blood the morning after partying and drinking sessions.

## 7 Can I smoke and drink alcohol after donating blood?

It is important to avoid smoking for at least two hours following blood donation, whereas alcohol consumption is not advisable for the rest of the day as this can cause dizziness and discomfort.

## 8 What does a unit (bag) of whole blood donation consist of?

A bag contains 475ml of blood that is processed into three products:

- **Red Cell Concentrate** - RCC - A dense red cell consistency
- **Plasma** - the clear liquid component of blood
- **Platelets** - cells that assist the coagulation of blood.

Thus, by making just one donation, one will be able to help three patients.

