



A Students Guide to Blood Donation

Why should I donate Blood?

Because you make a difference!

Almost everyone during their life will know someone who needs a blood transfusion. They may be a car accident or trauma victims, cancer or transplant patients, or people with sickle cell disease or other blood disorders. There is no substitute and still only one source of blood for transfusion – volunteer blood donors. This guide will provide you with information about measures you can take before, during, and after blood donation for a good experience.

Learning more about blood donation and knowing what to expect should improve your donation experience.

What should I do to prepare?

Before donation:

- Get at least 8 hours of sleep the night before your donation
- Eat a healthy breakfast or lunch – both if your donation is later in the day
- Do not skip meals on the day of blood donation
- Drink plenty of fluids in the days before you donate (avoid or minimize alcohol).

On the day of your donation, start the day with a glass of water or juice.



The Blood Transfusion Service of Namibia, @NamBTSservice

t: 061-386 300
e: pro@bts.com.na
www.bts.com.na

NAMBTS
donate life



What happens during the blood donation process?



1. Registration

- Remember to bring along your signed parental / Guardian consent if you are 16 or 17 years old and planning to donate for the first time
- Bring the names of the medications that you are taking
- Read the educational materials provided about donating blood
- Complete a Medical History Questionnaire and Declaration form which has questions on your general health and lifestyle
- DO NOT share your answers with your friends or other donors
- Ask the NAMBTS staff members if you have questions and not your friends or other donors



4. Refreshments

- You should spend at least 15 minutes or more enjoying the refreshment in the refreshment area
- If you feel lightheaded or dizzy, tell a staff member immediately and remain seated



2. Donor Screening

- You should feel healthy and well, and meet other criteria
- We will check your weight, haemoglobin level, blood pressure and pulse
- We will ask you questions about your general health, medication use, sexual behaviour and other risk factors for infectious diseases during a private and confidential interview. This protects your health and safety of patients who receive blood transfusions



3. Donation

- We will cleanse an area of your arm and insert a needle to draw blood.
- You can relax, listen to music, chat with your friends and other donors or read while donating blood.
- After the collection, a staff member will remove the needle and apply firm pressure to stop the blood. A plaster will be placed on your arm before you leave the donation chair.



5. After Donation

- Be sure to sit in the refreshment area for 15 minutes or more and have a drink and cookies. Afterwards, drink plenty of fluids to stay well-hydrated.
- Most donors have uneventful donations and feel good about donating.
- However, some donors may experience light-headedness, dizziness, or an upset tummy that resolves soon after donation.
- Although less common, a donor may faint after blood donation. If you feel faint, stop what you are doing and sit or lie down until you feel better.
- The staff will provide you with a pamphlet after your donation with actions to take to prevent these reactions. If you experience the reactions, the pamphlet will provide you with steps to follow.



6. Sport

- Athletes should not do any heavy lifting or vigorous exercise for the rest of the day. You temporarily lose fluid after donation, which your body replaces within 24 hours or sooner if you drink extra fluids. As a precaution, do not donate blood on the same day of a competition or strenuous practice.
- After a whole blood donation, your body replaces the red blood cells (the cells that deliver oxygen to muscles and tissues) within about 5 - 8 weeks, depending on nutrition and iron status.
- High-performance competitive athletes may notice a marginal decrease in exercise tolerance for about 1 week after a whole blood donation.
- However, if you are 18 years or older and a high-performance competitive athlete, speak to our staff about donating other components where you only donate platelets and plasma and your red blood cells are returned to you.