

August 2023, Edition 9

BLOOD STREAM

Newsletter

In this issue:

Recognition Awards 2023

Dr van Zyl on Anaemia

What to do before donating blood

Double Red cell program

and more...



NAMBTS
donate life





IRON AND BLOOD DONATION

A diet high in iron is essential to maintain energy and is also very important for your overall health. As a blood donor, it is important to have the required Hb level to donate blood. A low Hb level is one of the most common reasons for being deferred from donating.

I have attended many donor clinics where the reason for being deferred is low iron. Every time you donate blood, we test your Hb level. For men the level needs to be 13.5g/dl and for our females' 12.5g/dl.

To understand more on the subject please read the article by Dr Carla van Zyl our Medical Officer, as she explains how this correlates with blood donation. This edition features a special recipe rich in iron.

We know our Namibians love a diet rich in meat. Eat your meat but remember to add iron rich vegetables and fruit. Our editors have tested the recipe so get cooking and get iron-spiced!

Zita Tobin
Manager: Marketing & Donor Relations
Editor

STEAKS WITH GOULASH SAUCE AND SWEET POTATO FRIES

Prep: 10min Cook: 25min Serves: 2

Ingredients

- 3 tsp rapeseed oil, plus extra for the steaks
- 250g sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into narrow chips
- 1 tbsp fresh thyme leaves
- 2 small onions, halved and sliced (190g)
- 1 green pepper, deseeded and diced
- 2 garlic cloves, sliced
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 85g cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 tbsp tomato purée
- 1 tsp vegetable bouillon powder
- 2 x 125g fillet steaks, rubbed with a little rapeseed oil
- 200g bag baby spinach, wilted in a pan or the microwave



Method

STEP 1

Heat oven to 240C/220C fan/gas 7 and put a wire rack on top of a baking tray. Toss the sweet potatoes and thyme with 2 tsp oil in a bowl, then scatter them over the rack and set aside until ready to cook.

STEP 2

Heat 1 tsp oil in a non-stick pan, add the onions, cover the pan and leave to cook for 5 mins. Take off the lid and stir – they should be a little charred now. Stir in the green pepper and garlic, cover the pan and cook for 5 mins more. Put the potatoes in the oven and bake for 15 mins.

STEP 3

While the potatoes are cooking, stir the paprika into the onions and peppers, pour in 150ml water and stir in the cherry tomatoes, tomato purée and bouillon. Cover and simmer for 10 mins.

STEP 4

Pan-fry the steak in a hot, non-stick pan for 2-3 mins each side depending on their thickness. Rest for 5 mins. Spoon the goulash sauce onto plates and top with the beef. Serve the chips and spinach alongside.

BLOOD RECIPIENT TESTIMONIAL SEEBI ITEWA (HANGHOME)



“Seebi's eyes would always turn yellow and he would form lumps around his body. Some doctors initially thought Seebi had Hepatitis and he would relentlessly keep coughing, even when we tried all types of coughing medication.”
Caretaker Jenette Theron, Hope Village, Tsumeb.

Seebi Itewa (Hanghome), now 7, was abandoned at a local hospital at just 1 year and 7 months old. Whilst being treated for malnutrition, Seebi would also have to receive a number of blood transfusions to treat a very rare condition.

Seebi was diagnosed with a sickle cell blood disorder and was prescribed periodic blood transfusions that caused him a lot of physical pain. These pain, whilst acute pains can only be managed at a hospital.

“His condition improves significantly after blood transfusions and the coughing and pain subsides. I really want to urge fellow Namibians to donate blood to assist patients like Seebi because blood is life. Do not wait until you or a loved are in a crisis. When I saw first hand how this can help patients like Seebi, I feel motivated to donate as well,” says caretaker Jenette Theron.

Seebi is now enrolled at Tsumeb Gymnasium and continues to thrive as he receives blood transfusions.



Seebi Itewa and caretaker, Jenette Theron

Story by: Titus Shivute, Supervisor: Marketing & Donor Relations

Q&A: ANAEMIA

by Dr Carla van Zyl, Medical Officer at NamBTS

“The most common deferral for donating blood is low iron in your blood, also known as Iron Deficiency Anaemia. To be eligible to donate blood your haemoglobin level must be 13.5g/dl for males and 12.5g/dl for females.”



How does blood donation affect iron and can it lead to iron deficiency anaemia?

Donating a unit of whole blood can lead to an iron loss of about 200 – 250 mg so yes if iron stores is lost faster than you can replace them and this can lead to iron deficiency anaemia.

What is anaemia?

Anaemia is when the haemoglobin concentration within red blood cells is lower than normal, less than 12.5g/dl for males and 12.0g/dl for females. Haemoglobin is a protein in your red blood cells that carries oxygen to your tissues. Iron is a building block of haemoglobin.

What are the symptoms?

Most individuals with low iron do not have symptoms. Symptoms are usually seen when iron deficiency leads to anaemia. The most common symptoms seen in iron deficiency anaemia are tiredness, weakness, dizziness, sores on the tongue, and unusual cravings for non-nutritious substances such as ice or dirt.

How long is the deferral period?

The deferral period ranges from 3 – 12 months depending on the gender and haemoglobin level of the donor. The deferral periods are as follow according to the NAMBTS standard operating procedure:

Anaemia Deferral Period:		
Gender:	Haemoglobin Level (g/dL):	Deferral Period (months):
Female	11 – 12.4	3
	10.5 – 10.9	6
	≤ 10.4	12
Male	≤ 12.4	6

What can be done to increase iron?

Iron in your blood can be increased by eating a well-balanced, nutritious diet rich in both iron (e.g. red meat, liver, beans, spinach, kale, apricots, iron-fortified cereals, breads & pastas) and vitamin C (e.g. oranges, kiwi fruit, melons & lemons). Eating vitamin C rich foods enhances iron absorption. Avoid food items that can interfere with iron absorption (e.g. black tea, coffee, wine, milk, cheese, cocoa, etc.). Diet alone may not be sufficient to replace iron if you routinely lose iron through whole blood donation. In these cases, additional iron supplementation is recommended to speed up recovery of iron lost through blood donation.

Can one donate blood while taking iron tablets?

You can donate blood while taking iron tablets for supplementation purposes. However, you cannot donate blood while taking iron tablets to treat low iron so you cannot donate blood if you are taking iron tablets prescribed by a doctor to treat iron deficiency anaemia.

When should one consult a doctor?

When your haemoglobin level is less than 11g/dL for female and 12.5g/dL for males. Your doctor would need to do a full blood examination and iron studies, particularly serum ferritin levels to rule out iron deficiency anaemia since it is the most common cause of anaemia.

When will a doctor request an anaemic patient to get a blood transfusion?

Patients rarely require a blood transfusion for mild to moderate anaemia. In most cases iron deficiency anaemia can be managed with an iron rich diet and iron supplementation. A blood transfusion is only required in severe cases where a patient is either clinically decompensated and/or actively bleeding. In these severe cases the patient will require a blood transfusion, since the red blood cells needs to be replaced fast which cannot be achieved by diet or iron supplementation alone.

Anaemia Checklist

- Are your nails brittle?
- Is your skin pale?
- Shortness of breath?
- Do you have mouth sores?
- Do you feel lightheaded?
- Are the whites of your eyes bluish?

A MOMENT WITH NDAWENDAPO SELLY ENKONO

“My body had turned yellowish in colour, I had lost a tremendous amount of weight and was very weak due to the fact that I would always throw up after eating. My mother immediately started looking for a private medical doctor and soon she was referred to Professor Aamambo who suspected anaemia.”



Tell us about yourself and how you ended up receiving blood:

My name is Ndawendapo Enkono well known by the name Selly. I am originally from Windhoek and am currently at my village located about 12km out of Omuthiya - a place called Okapuku.

My body had started giving off signs which were not common and which I never understood. I had to seek medical assistance around Windhoek and nobody seemed to really tell me what was going on with my body. I then decided to ignore the signs. On the 21st December 2022, I travelled home to my mother because I was in a bad state and I felt like giving up on life. When my mother saw me, she became scared because she could sense and see that I was not fine. Since I am unemployed and have no medical aid, she advised me to go to Onandjokwe State Hospital for further medical monitoring. I was then admitted to the hospital on the 28th of December 2022. While in Onandjokwe hospital, the doctors concluded that I urgently needed a blood transfusion because my blood count was very low. I was very sceptical when I was told that I needed a blood transfusion. Not having enough information on this procedure, I was convinced that it was unsafe. I declined the blood transfusion, stayed in the hospital for a few days and was later discharged. The vomiting got worse, my feet began feeling numb and I had no physical energy to do anything. Long story short, I was admitted again and agreed to receive a blood transfusion. I was monitored carefully and there were no negative reactions. I could sense improvement immediately. I give credit to the Onandjokwe hospital and its staff as they are peaceful and help their patients with so much love. To be honest, I wouldn't have been alive if it was not for the blood transfusion.

Why would you encourage people to donate blood?

To help save the helpless like myself at some point in life.

How was your condition improved by blood donation?

Although I am still recovering, I am strong and I have great physical energy.

How many units of blood did you get?

I got 6 units of blood.

Any last words to the general public?

At first I had made a mistake by declining the blood transfusion because of lack of knowledge. To those who may need a blood transfusion, please go for it. The procedure is safe (safe and healthy blood) and will most definitely save your life. Secondly, I would like to urge the public to please donate blood so that NAMBTS will be able to meet the demand of all the health facilities country wide.

Story by: Michael Sheyavali, Senior Marketing Officer

TRANSPORT FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE

“Donor service is as important to us as donor satisfaction. Our donors appreciate the personalised service whilst others appreciate the safety and convenience of not having to make use of public transport to come and donate.”

-Zita Tobin, Manager: Marketing and Donor Relations

What started off as a service to encourage donors to come and donate during Covid -19 has now turned into an integral part of what we do. On average 350 donors are transported per month from the convenience of their home or place of work to donor centres in Windhoek, Walvis Bay, Swakopmund, Ondangwa and Oshakati as well as our town clinics in Rehoboth, Okahandja, Otjiwarongo, Outjo, Tsumeb, Grootfontein, Gobabis, Mariental and Keetmanshoop.

The NAMBTS Headquarters at 35 Tal street in Windhoek opens daily from 07h00–16h00, however on Tuesdays and Thursdays we open from 07h00–18h00.

The NAMBTS Channel Life centre located at 39 Post Street Mall has replaced our previous United House Centre and operates between 08h30–16h00, Mondays – Fridays.

The NAMBTS Swakopmund centre is situated on 4 Ferdinand Sticht Street and is open on Mondays between 10h00 and 18h00.

The NAMBTS Walvis Bay centre is located on 14th street number 55 behind Welwitschia Medi Park Hospital and is open on Tuesdays from 10h00–18h00.

In Ondangwa, find us at Gwashamba Mall on Tuesdays from 10:00–18:00. In Oshakati, we are at the Oshakati State hospital, open on Thursdays from 10h00–18h00.

Our service welcomes groups of friends and colleagues who want to donate.

To organise transport please call: Windhoek: 061-386 300 or 081 122 1265 | Coast: 081 143 4893 | North: 081 162 0834.



Evander January and donor
Astrid Riedel

SAVING LIVES - KEEPS US TOGETHER

Uhunga Kalla

"Every day, there are people who end up in hospitals that require blood transfusions to stay alive, an hour out of your day to donate blood could ensure that someone is able to make it back home, to their loved ones. Blood donation is one of the most heroic things one could do with their time, thus I urge everybody who is able to donate blood, to save a life today."

Wapale Kalla

"Let's unite and save lives, one day when you or your loved one are in need of blood, the Blood Transfusion Service of Namibia, would be able to save your life."

Tumbi Kalla

"Who wouldn't want to be a hero? Who doesn't want to save a life?"

Brought up to do right always, the close-knit Kalla family spent their early days in Oranjemund. Inspired by the head of the family Matheus Kalla who instilled the discipline and morals into his sons who started donating blood in February 2013 - his sons Wapale, Mutumbi and Uhunga adopted this culture. Wapale coordinated the trips to the blood donation centre. Matheus Kalla, has donated 62 times to date and has saved a minimum of 186 lives thus far.

His sons have donated between 22 - 62 times each having collectively saved about 573 lives.

With the men in his family big advocates for donating blood, Uhunga always wanted to donate. Uhunga thinking: 'It would be so cool to save lives,' started donating blood in his mid twenties and loves how relatively easy it is to do so.

Wapale, who is the oldest amongst the brothers, started donating blood avoiding time in class at Delta Secondary School. His father was his main motivation for donating blood. As his father boasted about being a proud donor even before his children were born.

"The more lives saved, the better and that motivates me to reach a hundred donations soon," Wapale says. He has progressed from donating whole blood to donating plasma (Plasmapheresis) as he produces a lot and many people need it. He rubbishes misconceptions of 'one's blood running out when donating blood' Wapale urges all those who can, to donate blood as he has successfully educated and had more than 20 of his friends and family come in with him to donate blood.

Tumbi had always wanted to donate blood, at the blood donation drives at Delta Secondary School. When he could not - he put a bandage on his arm to appear as though he had donated blood 'just to be part of the crew.' Tumbi first donated in order to get the prestigious 'No Chicken Award' which kicked off his blood donation journey.



Father Matheus Kalla and sons.

Story by: Frieda Vatileni - Asino, Marketing Officer

WHAT TO DO BEFORE DONATING BLOOD



Drink enough water



Avoid heavy physical activities



Eat food rich in iron and protein



Get enough sleep



Avoid smoking & drinking alcohol

MOU WITH SHINCHEONJI CHURCH OF JESUS

Shincheonji Church of Jesus formalised their collaboration with Blood Transfusion Service towards blood donation recently.

The church will actively promote education on the importance of blood donation and host regular clinics at their Church to ensure adequate blood supply within Namibia.



Representative Elione Calunga of Shincheonji Church and Zita Tobin

DOUBLE RED CELL APHERESIS

Double Your Donation

You can now save even more lives by becoming a Double Red Blood Cell Donor which allows you to double the impact of your donation and donate less frequently.

The most commonly transfused blood component is red blood cells. Red blood cells typically live for about 4 months and are produced in the bone marrow.

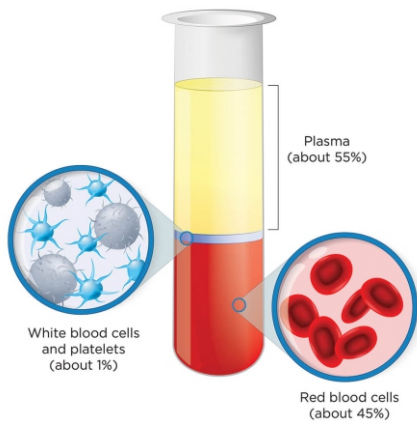
Their main function is to provide oxygen from your lungs to the body's tissues which then convert it into carbon dioxide which you exhale.

Volunteering to donate double red cells allows you to give to units of red cells, reducing the need to donate as often.

Recommended blood types are O- and O+ and donors can donate every 4 months. With the white blood cells removed, the products produced can assist cancer patients, multiple or chronically transfused patients, patients awaiting transplants and is recommended for use in children under the age of 12.



One donation = Double the impact



Please note that in order to be eligible for this program, you need to be at least 18 years old and have donated blood at least once in the past year. A healthy lifestyle including your sexual health is vital and you must weigh at least 70 kilograms.

Visit our Tal Street headquarters or call us at 061- 286 300/322/323/325 and our helpful staff will answer any questions you may have. You can also mail us at clemicsisters@bts.com.na.

What should I do 24 hours before I donate?

Step 1

The day before donation...HYDRATE

- Increase your fluid intake.
- Avoid fatty food

Step 2

The night before donation...GET SLEEP

Get a good night sleep prior to donation day.

Step 3

The morning of donation...EAT BREAKFAST/MEAL

Eat a well balanced breakfast/meal the morning /day of your donation.

Step 4

The morning of donation...CLOTHING

Wear comfortable loose-fitting clothes, with sleeves that can be rolled up past the elbow

Step 5

Right before donation...HYDRATE

Drink water right before your donation

After the donation...IRON

When you donate red blood cells, you lose some iron. We recommend that you increase the foods rich in iron in your diet- a pamphlet will be provided.

Book your next appointment.



Wilhelm Bayer launched the double red cell program on 28 February 2023.



Double red cell donor Michael van Zyl



CONNECTING READERS TO STEFFI GAWESEB

Customer Care Agent: Marketing and Donor Relations Department

What's your favourite time of the day?

The afternoon. I get to spend time with my twin nieces when I get home.

Sweet or Savoury?

Savoury. Droëwors and biltong especially.

What makes you happy?

As I am getting older, I am starting to appreciate family more. I am the happiest when I can spend a whole day with my family.

What makes you sad?

When people take advantage of my kindness.

Are you an introvert or extrovert?

Depending on where I am. I believe in acting a way that compliments my surroundings. I cannot be loud and playful at work but I can be totally different outside of work especially.

What series are you watching?

OZARKS (Inspired by Breaking Bad)

What is your favorite board game?

Monopoly

Wine or Juice?

-Juice (I do not consume alcohol).

What are you most excited about for the remainder of 2023?

MY WEDDING!!!

How many kids would you like to have?

Just 1

Romantic date or Netflix and Chill?

Romantic date.

What is your favorite song currently?

Highs and Lows by Hillsong

What makes you proud to be part of NamBTS?

Knowing that the service we provide has such a positive impact on patients country-wide.

DID YOU KNOW?

Blood contains the same amount of salt as the ocean.



DYNAMIC MOBILE SOLUTIONS

The Dynamic Mobile Solutions team regularly donate as a company and won an award at our Recognition Awards.

General Manager Kashifa De Beer says: "As a proudly Namibian owned SME, DMS believes in giving back to the community in whatever capacity possible. Oscar Wilde said: "The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention." With this in mind, we aim to make a difference whether it be in business or how we choose to give back be it in time, money, or blood.

Donating blood allows us the opportunity to share as well as spend time together as a team doing good deeds - both CSR and team building in one go!

We challenge other companies to take the time out and visit the NAMBTS offices. Your donation could save lives!"



Ista Johannes (DMS) and
Evander January (NamBTS)



Ista Johannes, Robert Reid,
Reagon Graig, Christoff Niewoudt
and Kashifa De Beer.

DONOR RECOGNITION AWARDS 2023



Delta Secondary School Peer Promoter centre ,
Sr Clerry Upingasana (left) and Sr Valery Hoebes (right).



Montenique Bekker (left) from Binary City and
General Manager Christa Gouws (right).



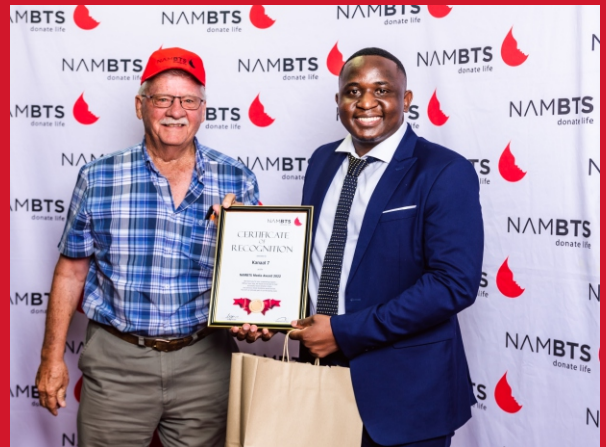
Future Media News Angie Scholtz and Titus Shivute.



B2 Gold Otjikoto Mine and Medical Officer Dr Carla van Zyl



Roger Muundjua (left) and Antonio Frans (right) from
Coca Cola and Linda Fata (centre)



Charlie Ellis on behalf of the Kanaal 7 radio station
and Titus Shivute.



Miss Teen Namibia 2022 Zoe Karsten with Linda Fata



Dr Lemmer HS principal (left) and Dr Carla van Zyl.