

August 2022, Edition 8

# BLOOD STREAM

## Newsletter

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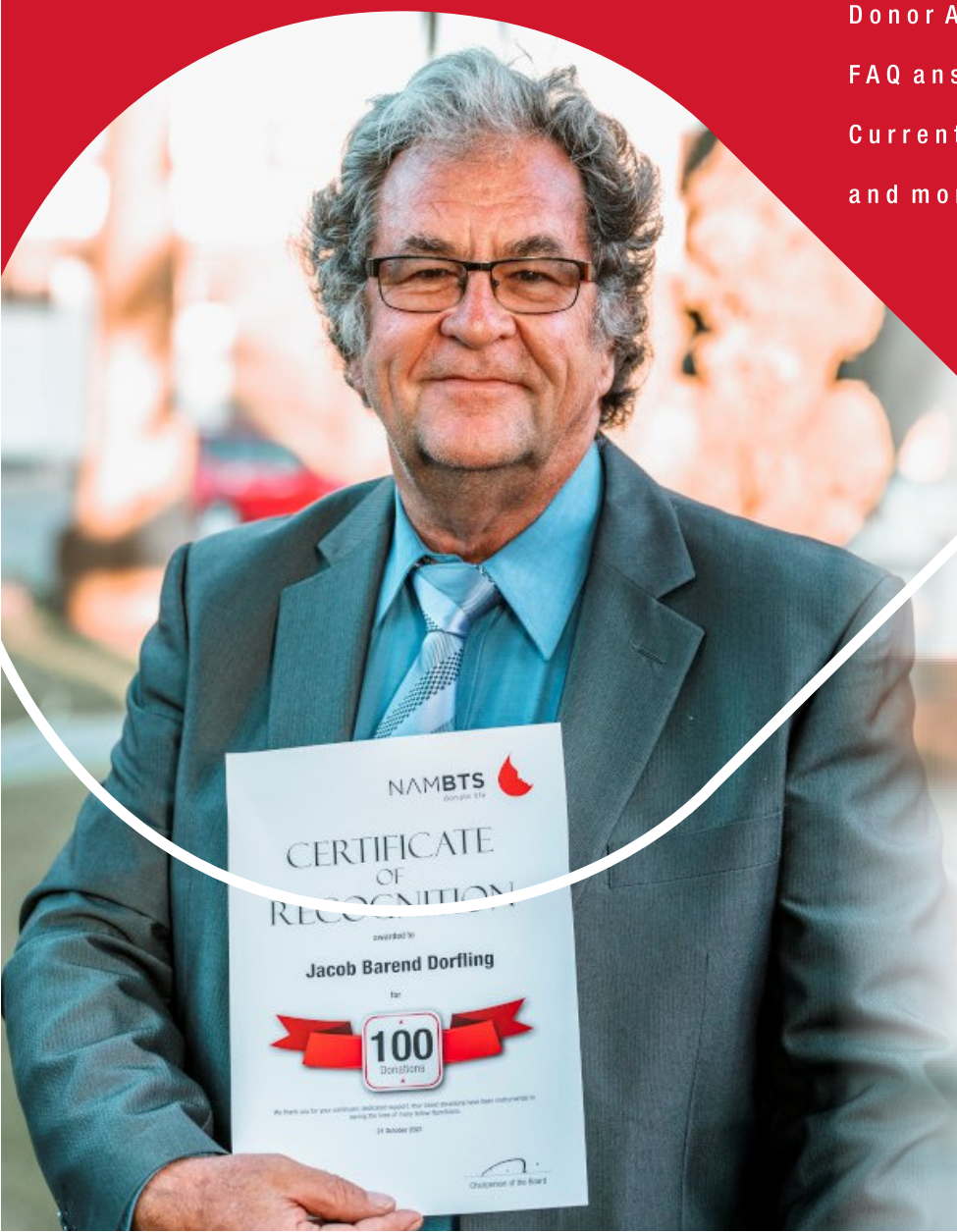
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**NAMBTS**  
donate life





# Importance of Blood Donation

By Frieda Vatileni: Marketing Officer and Editor

Blood donation is a very important part of healthcare. Doctors around the world use blood transfusions to save lives, daily. The reason to donate blood is simple. ...it helps save lives. In fact, every two seconds of every day, someone needs blood. Since blood cannot be manufactured outside the body and has a limited shelf life, the supply must constantly be replenished by generous blood donors. The demand for donated blood in our nation's hospitals, is consistently high and the demand never stops.

We are heading into severe winter months, it makes it a bit difficult for donors to get to the blood donation centers. The NAMBTS has looked into the need of donors and established a taxi incentive, where the blood donor is provided with taxi money, to go to the blood donation center and donate blood, should transport be an issue. The need for blood donation is always present. For many people, the reason they donate blood is simply that they feel it is the right thing to do. Donated blood is used for a wide range of circumstances that can potentially affect anyone, which is also a main reason people donate. Patients undergoing treatment for injuries suffered during an accident often rely on donated blood to save their lives.

A mother experiencing labor difficulties is another situation when blood donations are critical, along with children getting chemotherapy for cancer, premature babies and seniors with anemia.

With that said, I sincerely urge all eligible donors to donate blood and save lives, this winter.

## Reasons to donate blood:

### 1. Blood is in high demand:

Though blood drives may seem to be a ubiquitous part of our lives, only a small percentage of the population donates regularly. The NAMBTS is always in need of more blood donations to meet the demand.

### 2. You never know when disaster may strike:

While no one likes to imagine being in a situation where he or she or a loved one needs blood, the likelihood is that it will occur at some point in time. By donating blood on a regular basis, you're helping ensure that there are units available when someone you care about is in need.

### 3. You can save multiple lives:

Each time you donate blood it can make a bigger difference than you realize. Blood donations are regularly needed by cancer patients, organ transplant recipients and accident victims. Even a one time donation can help multiple people, so just think about how many people you can save by donating on a regular basis.

### 4. It's safe and easy to donate blood:

Blood drives are run by certified health care professionals who emphasize safety and efficiency. Not only do you get a free brief physical when you donate blood, but you also essentially get a free screening for major diseases. The process is fast and easy.

### 5 It's an act of kindness and compassion:

One donation can help save the lives of up to three people. It's a truly selfless act. There is personal satisfaction that you may have saved someone's life. The fact that you're healthy and can do it is its own reward.

## Blood donor testimonial

by Tuhafeni Kashe



During my years at high school, the NAMBTS did regular drives at our school. I did not go to the clinic setup as I never really understood blood donation, it was a scary concept to me.

While at University, a friend convinced me to escort them to the blood donation head quarters, on Tal Street. While waiting for my friend to complete the donation process, I ended up asking a lot of questions, as to become comfortable with the concept of blood donation. After the friendly staff answered all of my questions and calmed my fear, I ended up donating blood for the first time, due to the confidence they gave me. We should all do our part in society to maintain a great and just society. Donating blood is just one small thing that we can do that will continue saving lives, it may even end up saving a friend's or a family member's life.

The biggest fear that people have, are the needles and I had the exact same fear but once you donate blood, you come to the realization that there are very well trained professionals and nurses at hand. It doesn't hurt a bit, it's so effortless and painless.

Donating blood gives me so much joy that every time I donate blood I get to save 3 peoples lives. That's what keeps me going back to always donating, one day it may be me that would need a donation. There is a saying, "Be the change that you would like to see in the world," I live by that saying and if ever I would like my life to be saved, I should do the same.

I would like to emphasize that blood donation is a crucial part in saving lives, for those who can, let us go out there and donate blood as much as we can. There is a saying that goes "We should leave the world a little better than what we found it". It's the little things that goes a long way, your blood donation can save a life or lives and it can change it as well. So let's take care of each other and be there for the next person.

\*Tuhafeni Kashe has donated blood 6 times and has saved 18 lives.



# Fixed Sites for blood donation in northern Namibia

Fixed Sites are blood donation centers, that are not mobile. NAMBTS currently has 6 fixed site venues which are:

The NAMBTS headquarters, which are situated on 35 Tal street in Windhoek. This is the only fixed site center in the country that boasts an apheresis department too. Apheresis is defined as a technique by which a particular substance or component is removed from the blood, the main volume being returned to the body, which is mainly platelets and plasma.

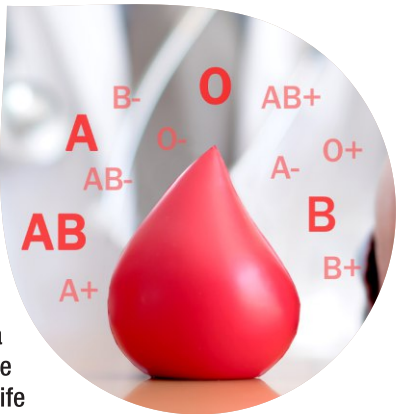
The NAMBTS Channel Life center is located at 39 Post Street Mall, this center has replaced our previous United House Center, which was situated on Independence Avenue. The Channel Life center, boasts a bigger space, making it more comfortable and convenient for more donors to be in the venue, at the same time. Our friendly staff are ready to welcome each and every donor to our new center. Our Channel Life Center is open between 10h00 - 16h00 from Mondays - Fridays.

The NAMBTS Swakopmund center is situated on Ferdinand Stitch Street number 4 and is only open on Mondays between 10h00 and 18h00. The closing time, allows for the working class to donate blood in Swakopmund after working hours.

The NAMBTS Walvis Bay center is located on 14th street number 55, at Welwitschia Medi Park Hospital. This center is only open on Tuesday between 10h00 - 18h00. Our friendly staff are always ready to welcome every donor, with a smile.

The NAMBTS Ondangwa center, is situated at Gwashamba Mall. This allows for all donors who live in the surrounding area, to donate blood on Tuesday between 10:00 - 18:00. Our friendly staff, are always at hand, to receive and host you.

The NAMBTS Oshakati center is situated on the grounds of the Oshakati State hospital and is open every Thursday between 10h00 - 18h00. Our centers are open to groups of friends and colleagues



## Blood Recipient Testimonial - Soini Muronga, born 20 December 1995 writes:

I was involved in a car accident on the 24 April 2022, resulting in the dislocation of my left hip. I was in severe pain at my hip and had also felt pain all over my body. I don't remember too much with regards to the accident and how it happened.

My understanding of blood donation is that blood is donated to assist those in need, mostly to save lives. Blood donation to me, means that I can donate my blood, so that it is used by someone else, in need.

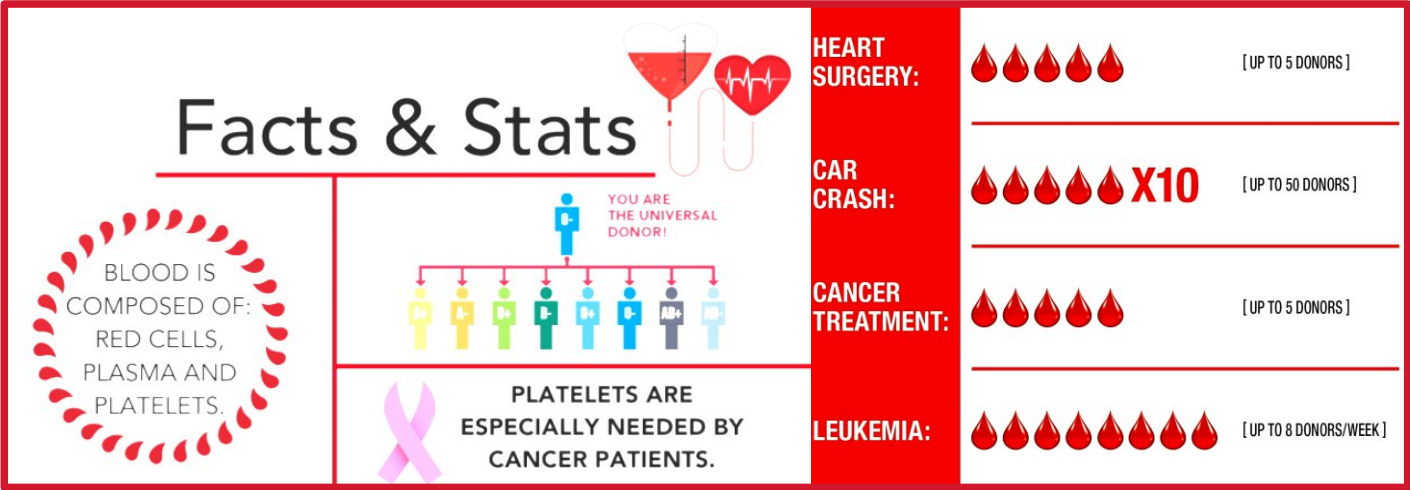
I am an extremely happy and grateful blood recipient, had it not been for the blood donor, that was kind enough to donate their blood that day, things would have been different for me, today. I would like to sincerely thank the person that donated his/her blood to me. I would be facing more serious health issues, right now, had I not received a blood transfusion.

Once I have completely healed, I would like to become a blood donor. My perception has changed drastically after my accident, as I had so many misconceptions with regards to donating blood before.

I would like to encourage people worldwide, that we should become part of the global blood donation family. We would never know, when ourselves, our family members, friends or acquaintances would need a blood transfusion.

Thank you very much to the blood donor and Namibia Blood Transfusion Service for saving my life.

\*Soini is a 26 year old blood recipient who was involved in a car accident on the 24th April 2022.



# COASTAL DONOR AWARDS

The event was hosted Thursday 3 March 2022 to acknowledge the achievements in blood donation during the 2021 year for the coastal region. Thirty-six milestone donors received awards in the categories of 50, 75, 100, 125 and 250 donations.

The award of 250 milestone donations went to the very humble Stefanus van Niekerk, who when interviewed by Zita Tobin, modestly said "I did nothing all the hard work comes from the clinic staff, they do the work not me, I just sit on the chair".

Recognition awards were awarded to industry leaders in various categories such as Top Clinic Contact, Corporate Award, Community Award, School Award, Tertiary Educational Institutional Award, Peer Promoters Award, Retail Award, Industrial Award as well as the Donation/Sponsorship Award who went to Dave Baillie and Debbie Baillie, who sponsored cash towards a TV screen for both Swakopmund and Walvis Bay fixed sites. Swakopmund Municipality also donated cash and Orano Mining sponsored N\$10,000 for our festive campaign which covered radio adverts for the December period.

The event was thoroughly enjoyed by the NamBTS family of donors and contacts the very people that make us successful in saving lives every day.



## Blood Donation Quiz

Answer the following questions and see how many you get right!

### 1. What is the quantity of blood donated in one sitting?

- a. 2 litres
- b. 5 milliliters
- c. 450 ml
- d. 1000 milliliters

### 2. At what age can you start donating blood?

- a. 16, with parental consent
- b. 14 without parental consent
- c. 11 years old
- d. 3 years old

### 3. What is apheresis?

- a. The scientific term for blood donation.
- b. Fatigue experienced after blood donation
- c. Blood donation where specific components of blood are separated and transfused
- d. Period during which a person is prohibited from donating blood

### 4. What is an Allogenic transfusion?

- a. blood-forming cells donated by someone else
- b. when a donor and a recipient are not the same person
- c. when blood clots
- d. when you have anaemia

### 5. What is an Autologous blood transfusion?

- a. reinfusion of blood or blood components to the same individual from whom they were taken
- b. when we share a pint of blood
- c. when we separate the blood compartments
- d. when we go on holiday with our friends

Answers: 1.c 2.a 3.c 4.b 5.a

## Donor testimonial

### - Tuhafeni Nghipumbwa

My story behind donating blood started off as a joke but then eventually, I just felt the need to be in a position to help someone else who might need it.

When I started reading more and more about why one needs to donate blood and the short supply of it, it grew onto me.

My theory is simple as I'm just here to help the next person who is in need of it and to save lives.

The big needle doesn't leave a big hole in your veins after you donate blood and it's not even sore at all, since a lot of people are afraid of it.

I am prompted to continue donating blood as it's just the fact that I'm helping the next person who needs it. The friendly staff members are also cool to chat with.

I would say the driving factor that always brings me back is that I'm in a position where my blood is needed. The sense of knowing i might just help save someone's life is more than enough for me, there is a feel good factor to it.

I would like to encourage people to start donating blood for the mere fact that their blood, whichever type it may be, will help save someone's life



in some way. The shortage of blood supply is at a critical level and we as individuals or as a community can make that small difference if we all come together and donate. We never know when it might be our family member, friend or even yourself in that position of needing blood.

\*Tuhafeni Nghipumbwa has donated 19 times and has saved 57 lives to date.





## Frequently Asked Questions from Blood Donors to Clinic Staff

### 1. Why is my Blood drop not going down, but my iron is okay in the machine?

Blood donor hemoglobin (Hb) estimation is an important donation test that is performed prior to blood donation. It serves the dual purpose of protecting the donors' health against anaemia and ensuring good quality of blood components, which has an implication on the recipients' health. The Copper Sulphate solution is a first level test which uses the gravimetric method. This method is based on the estimation of specific gravity of blood. The solution has a specific gravity of 1.053 which corresponds to an Hb level of 12.5 g/dL. This means, a drop of blood allowed to fall into a copper sulphate solution of specific gravity 1.053, becomes encased in a sac of copper proteinate, which prevents dispersion of fluid for 15 seconds. If the specific gravity of the blood is 12.5 g/dL or higher, the drop will sink and if it is lower, it will remain suspended for longer than 15 seconds.

However, although the method has withstood the test of time in ease of performance, the test may give false failures.

**The following factors have been identified as capable of affecting the results:**

- The anatomical source of the blood sample: the major source of blood from a finger prick is the loop capillaries, the concentration of which fluctuates with skin temperature, depth of skin penetration and dilution by extracellular tissue fluid exuded due to skin pressure.
- Incorporation of air bubbles in the sample
- Use of inadequate height for dropping the blood

Therefore, the use of a supplementary method such as the Hemoglobinometer (Hb meter) is important in order to prevent inappropriate deferrals.

### 2. Why should I fill in the form if I am a regular donor and have a donor card? Why does the form have so many questions?

The Membership card provides us with your donor number which assures us to find your right personal information on our system.

Before, every donor (regular or not) donates blood, it is important that they answer important questions by completing a comprehensive questionnaire known as the Donor Medical History Form which provides us with all your medical information and enables us to make an informed decision whether it is safe for you to donate blood and to give the blood to someone else. There are a number of infections that can be passed on through infected blood. Although we routinely test for a range of infections including HIV, Hepatitis B & C, and Syphilis, we cannot test for all infections, therefore, the information collected on the donor medical history form is crucial in assessing whether a donor is safe to donate. You and your blood are precious and potentially life-saving, so this is how we protect you and the recipient.

### 3. Why don't I receive Calls or Sms's to come and donate blood but my friend does?

All Sms and calls to our donors are demand based. Donors receive sms's and calls based on the demand of their blood type, however all donors are eligible to donate at any of our donation centres or mobile clinics.

### 4. Why do I give my blood for free but you sell it to the hospitals?

Blood donation in Namibia is voluntary and non-remunerated; no payment should be given to the donor as compensation for the donation. Although blood is donated for free, blood components are supplied at a cost recovery fee to cover costs related to blood collection, testing, processing, storage and distribution. Fees for blood components supplied to state patients are paid for by the government while medical aid companies pay for blood components received by their members. Patients without medical aid who receive blood in hospitals are responsible for paying for blood components themselves. Since NAMBTS operates on a cost recovery basis, recovery of major costs of producing a blood component is fundamental to financial sustainability.

### 5. Will I get my own blood if I need it one day?

Blood has a short shelf life and is used quickly in our Hospitals so it's highly unlikely that you would receive your own blood. However, be assured that blood that you are compatible with will be available for your transfusion.

By Sr Judith Sinvula  
Manager: Donor Division

# Blood donation during Flu Season

Blood donors are needed steadily throughout the year; however, many donors are often left wondering about the impact of flu on their ability to donate blood.

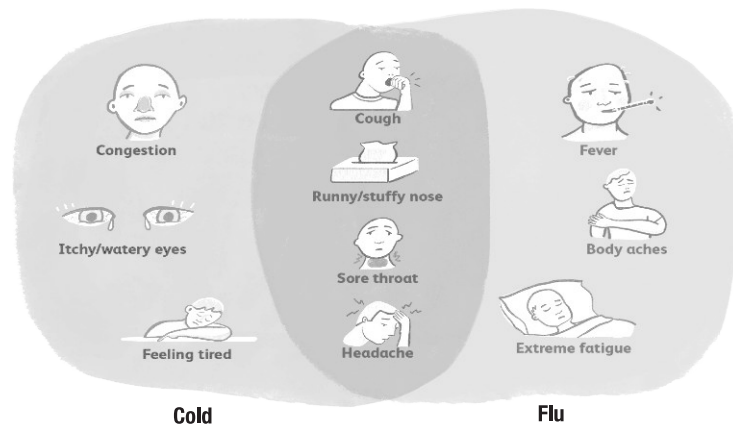
## What is the "Flu"?

Influenza, commonly known as the "flu" is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza virus that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. It is common during winter and beginning of spring. Influenza can cause mild to severe illness and the symptoms include:

- Fever or feeling feverish / chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Fatigue (tiredness)



Cold Symptoms vs Flu Symptoms



It is important to note that not everyone with flu will have fever though.

## Acceptability criteria for blood donation:

Prospective donors with influenza are deferred until symptom free (about 7 – 10 days). But what does this mean?

- After a mild respiratory tract infection (Mild RTI) with no fever, i.e. you no longer have that tickly cough or a sore throat, you may present for blood donation.
- After a severe respiratory tract infection (Severe RTI), with fever, and your doctor might have prescribed a course of antibiotics, even after the symptoms have cleared, you are required to wait for period of 7 days after completion of the antibiotics course.

This is to ensure that you are feeling healthy and well on the day of donation.

## Can I donate blood after a flu vaccine?

Yes – individuals are accepted for blood donation after receiving a flu shot provided they feel well. You can donate blood after having a flu jab, including on the same day, as long as you are feeling well. The flu vaccine is made from 'dead' (inactivated / recombinant) material, therefore, it does not affect your ability to donate.

## COVID–19 Regulations:

The health impact of COVID–19 has been devastating, and NAMBTS was not spared from the impact as blood donations declined. However, as we welcome the relaxed control measures for COVID–19, what can our donors expect when they visit our centres and mobile blood drives?

- Blood donors are not expected to wear masks when accessing the blood donation venues anymore.
- More donors will be accommodated at once as the social distancing has been relaxed.

However, our donor's health is a priority, therefore, the donors will still be expected to answer the medical questions on COVID–19 and deferred if symptoms are present. The medical questions about Covid–19 symptoms are important to ensure that you are feeling well and healthy as a blood donor.

## COVID–19 vaccinations and blood donations:

As prudent measures to protect donor health and avoid theoretical risk of unintentional transmission of vaccine agents to transfusion recipients, WHO recommends the following measures:

- Although, consistent with the current general global practice, recipients of SARS–CoV–2 vaccines that do not contain live virus may donate blood if they feel well, as SARS–CoV–2 vaccines have been developed only recently, a precautionary deferral period of up to seven days is considered to minimize the impact of call–backs from donors who develop symptoms subsequent to donating soon after vaccination.
- Recipients of live virus vaccines (e.g. virus vector based or live–attenuated virus vaccines) should be deferred for four weeks, which is consistent with current practices.



## Connecting Readers to Petrus-Nande Hainghome Medical Technician – NAMBTS

### What's your favorite time of the day?

Definitely early morning. It is mostly calm and has a cool breeze, so refreshing and a perfect start to the day, with the saffron sun rising. The morning usually only has a few distractions for me and is a great time to plan my day, read and research items of interest. I also do my best thinking over a dozen cups of coffee.

### Sweet or Savory?

Savory

### What makes you happy?

Money

### What makes you sad?

Pessimism. Remember that life isn't so bad, if you don't allow it to be. It's all about your reaction towards life.

### Are you an introvert or extrovert?

Introvert

### What series are you watching?

I am watching Ozarks on Netflix. I am more into documentaries.

### What is your favorite board game?

30 Seconds

### Wine or Juice?

Juice Please!!

### What are you most excited about for the remainder of 2022?

My vacay! I am going to the Maldives.

### How many kids would you like to have

Zero

### Romantic date or Netflix and Chill?

Romantic Date

### What is your favorite song currently?

Locosounds – Kokaumbo. Local is lekker!



### Did you know?

The cornea is the only organ in the entire human body that has no blood supply. It gets oxygen directly from the air.



# Complimentary Gift at Channel Life and Gwashamba Mall Donation Centres



**Donate Blood**  
**CHANNEL LIFE CENTRE**

AND RECEIVE COMPLIMENTARY AIRTIME  
TO THE VALUE OF N\$30 AS A TOKEN  
OF OUR APPRECIATION.

GET  
FREE  
N\$30  
AIRTIME

VENUE: 39 POST STREET MALL,  
(BETWEEN WERNHIL AND TOWN SQUARE)  
DATE: OPEN MONDAYS TO FRIDAYS  
TIME: 08H30-16H00  
TARGET: 25+ BLOOD DONATIONS DAILY

We offer transport for your convenience,  
kindly call/text Salmi on 0811221265 to  
make arrangements.

Please note that the airtime vouchers are only  
available to donors who donate on  
Tuesdays or Thursdays.

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TS & C'S APPLY



**Donate Blood**  
**AT THE ONDANGWA CENTRE**

AND RECEIVE COMPLIMENTARY AIRTIME  
TO THE VALUE OF N\$30 AS A TOKEN  
OF OUR APPRECIATION.

GET  
FREE  
N\$30  
AIRTIME

VENUE: GWASHAMBA MALL  
(OPPOSITE ACKERMANS)  
DATE: EVERY TUESDAY  
TIME: 10H00-18H00  
TARGET: 25+ BLOOD DONATIONS

We offer transport for your convenience,  
kindly call/text Adolf on 0811620834  
to make arrangements.

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