

Blood shortage prompts call for donations

July 6 2017



(HealthDay)—The American Red Cross needs your blood, and it needs it now.

The group issued an emergency call for donations on Wednesday. Over the past two months, there have been about 61,000 fewer donations than what is needed, the organization said.

"The decline in summer donations is causing a significant draw-down of our overall blood supply, and we urgently need people to give now to restock hospital shelves and help save lives," said Shaun Gilmore, president of Red Cross Biomedical Services.

The July 4th holiday has been especially challenging: Nearly 700 fewer blood drives were held this week than during an average week. That's the equivalent of no blood drives nationwide for an entire day, the agency explained.

"Every day, patients recovering from accidents or those receiving treatments for cancer or blood disorders rely on lifesaving blood products, regardless of the season," Gilmore added in a Red Cross news release.

Blood is needed by someone in the United States every 2 seconds. To meet the demand, the Red Cross must collect nearly 14,000 [blood donations](#) every day for patients at approximately 2,600 hospitals nationwide. The Red Cross supplies 40 percent of the country's blood.

To reduce the current shortage, the American Red Cross said it has added about 25,000 additional appointment slots at donation centers and community blood drives across the country over the next few weeks.

Many people don't realize how simple it is to make a blood or platelet donation.

"For a first-time donor, drink plenty of fluids, and eat a good breakfast," said blood [donor](#) Chris Hunt. "It's not difficult—you can do this!"

People who may be eligible to donate [blood](#) must be at least age 17 in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds, and be in generally good health.

You can make an appointment by using the Red Cross Blood Donor app, visiting redcrossblood.org or calling 1-800-REDCROSS (1-800-733-2767). Donors are also encouraged to invite a family member, friend or co-worker to donate.

More information: The American Red Cross has more about [blood donation](#).

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