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AMDI Magazine

e-issn 2735-041X, Volume 4, Issue 1 (2023)

Expert Column

The Surprisingly Positive Effects of Blood Donation

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PUBLISHED : 09 MAY 2023



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In Malaysia, the national use of blood averaged out to be about 2,000 units per day (1). In other words, there's a lot of blood needed! Blood transfusion is crucial for saving patients from different life-threatening conditions such as severe motor vehicle accidents, cancer and other surgery. In reality, there is no substitute for blood, albeit living in advanced medical society today. Therefore, we largely depend on blood donors to help medical fraternity to provide lifelines to needy patients.

Are you one of the many of those who have fears and doubts in donating blood? Don't worry, there are multiple steps taken to ensure the safety of donors. It starts with the pre-donation questionnaire, haemoglobin check, weight and blood pressure assessment and then followed by pre-donation counselling by a trained medical personnel. Even after the completion of blood donation, the donors are requested for mandatory rest prior to leaving in addition to the refreshments provided. You should read on why you should pop over to a blood donation drive the next time you see one! We have listed down several benefits of donating blood.

a. Save lives

3 lives can be saved with each unit of blood donated. Blood transfusions are useful in condition where immediate blood transfusion is needed.



b. Malaysia blood donor privilege

Do you know? In Malaysia, blood donors enjoy different medical benefits depending on the number of times they have donated their blood. The benefit can be referred to in the table below.

Donation Frequency	Blood Donor Privilege
1 time	Free outpatient treatment and medical treatment (excluding X-ray and surgical charges) and <u>second-class</u> wards for a period of * 4 months.
2 times (within 12 months)	Free Hepatitis B preventive injection
2 ~ 5 times	Free outpatient treatment and medical treatment and <u>second-class</u> wards for a period of * 4 months.
6 ~ 10 times	Free * 1 year outpatient treatment and <u>second-class</u> medical treatment for a * 6 month period.
11 ~ 15 times	Free * <u>2-year</u> outpatient treatment and medical treatment and second class wards for a * 1 year period.
16 ~ 20 times	Free outpatient treatment and medical treatment and <u>second-class</u> wards for a * 2 year period.
21 ~ 30 times	Free outpatient treatment and medical treatment and <u>second-class</u> wards for a period of * 3 years.
31 ~ 40 times	Free outpatient treatment and medical treatment and <u>first-class</u> wards for a period of * 4 years.
41 ~ 50 times	Free outpatient treatment and medical treatment and <u>first-class</u> wards for a period of * 6 years.
Over 50 times (for "Whole Blood") and Over 150 times (for apheresis donors)	Free outpatient treatment and first-class medical treatment and wards for 10 years and second-class wards of life after 10 years in first-class ward.

Table adapted from UMMC(2)

c. Burn calories

Yes! Blood donation can help to get rid of calories! Of course, you won't be slim after doing this, however research has shown that donating 568ml (1 pint) of blood can burn up to 650 calories (3).



d. Better cardiovascular health

Yes! Researchers have determined that blood donation had a long-term protection against cardiovascular disease (4).

e. Lower risk of getting cancer

If you donate blood, your body will have less iron to store. Studies have linked iron to free radicals that might cause cancer. Research has shown that the risk of cancer was reduced for those who donate blood 2 times a year compared to those who did not donate (5).

f. Promote Blood Cell Development

Your body's natural response to blood donation is to begin replacing the blood it has lost. This will help keep you healthy by increasing the rate at which new blood cells are produced in your bone marrow.

g. Maintain blood iron level

Haemoglobin, which is part of our blood, is made of iron. When there is too much iron in the body, it can build up in different organs and change how they work. So, by donating blood, not only do we achieve a balanced iron level in our body but we also help other people

along the way !!

Donating blood benefits both donors and receivers, therefore why not? Let's become one of the blood donors today!

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