

Saving a life: blood donation essay sample



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I. Introduction

A. Attention-Getter- Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines blood as, “ the fluid that circulates in the heart, arteries, capillaries, and veins of a vertebrate animal carrying nourishment and oxygen to and bringing away waste products from all parts of the body.” Blood is the essence of life itself created in our own bodies in the bone marrow. B. Blood donation is a relatively simple process that can save lives. C. We can trace our own blood supply from creation to transfusion; looking at how blood is created and used by the body, how blood is collected and donated and what happens to it after donation. So let’s get right to the marrow, inside the bones where it all begins.

II. A. According to the Puget Sound Blood Center, blood is produced by bone marrow inside your bones.

1. Three kinds of blood cells are produced inside the marrow: red blood cells, disease fighting white blood cells and blood clotting platelets. 2. From the bone marrow these cells enter the circulatory system by way of your blood vessels. 3. Here they are suspended in plasma, a watery liquid that makes up over half the total volume of blood. Plasma is actually 90% water which makes drinking your daily dose of water all the more important. 4. After the blood is made, it is pumped through your body, carrying oxygen to your cells and picking up waste products to be removed from the body while also helping fight disease, infections and even minor cuts and bruises. B. Now that your body is busy making plenty of blood, it can be donated.

1. Blood is needed every two seconds. It is estimated that 38% of the U. S. population is eligible to donate blood but less than 10% do so annually. 2.

Who can donate? Depending on what state you live in and their age restrictions, those people who are 16 years old or older, weigh more than 110 pounds and are in good general health are eligible to donate blood.

C. Dr. Jerry Squires of the Medical University of South Carolina described the process of donating blood.

1. The Red Cross or any blood collecting agency will start by asking personal information such as name, address, age, etc. 2. Secondly, they will ask a series of questions that relate to the safety of you as a donor and the safety of the blood that you're about to donate. 3. Next, they will take your temperature, check your pulse and your blood pressure. They will also check your iron and hemoglobin level. 4. Once the tests are done, you can donate blood and the process usually takes only 5-10 minutes. Once you are finished, you are asked to wait around for 15-20 minutes and drink some juice and have a cookie so that you aren't going to pass out when you leave because blood donation can leave you a little light headed.

D. Where does the donated blood go once it leaves your body and is stored?

1. Donated blood is scanned into a computer database and then most is spun in a centrifuge to separate the transfusable components- red cells, platelets and plasma. 2. Blood that will be used for transfusion has to be tested to make sure that it is free from any infectious diseases. 3. Blood is also tested to see what type it is: A, B, AB or O.

E. After testing blood is labeled, stored and sent where needed

1. Red Blood cells are stored in refrigerators at 6 degrees Celsius for up to 42 days
2. Platelets are stored at room temperature in agitators for up to 5 days
3. Plasma and Cryo are frozen and stored in freezers for up to one year.

III. Conclusion

A. From creation in your bone marrow to transfusion, you now know the processes that entail. B. Without realizing it, we are all making blood right now. You yourself can save someone's life by donating the essence of life, your blood. Visit your local blood donation center and donate today.