

# World Blood Donor Day

What can you do? Give blood. Give now. Give often. **14 JUNE 2017**

Every year, on 14 June, countries around the world celebrate World Blood Donor Day (WBDD). The event serves to raise awareness of the need for safe blood and blood products and to thank blood donors for their life-saving gifts of blood.

Blood is an important resource, both for planned treatments and urgent interventions. It can help patients suffering from life-threatening conditions live longer and with a higher quality of life, and supports complex medical and surgical procedures. Blood is also vital for treating the wounded during emergencies of all kinds (natural disasters, accidents, armed conflicts, etc.) and has an essential, life-saving role in maternal and perinatal care.

A blood service that gives patients access to safe blood and blood products in sufficient quantity is a key component of an effective health system. Ensuring safe and sufficient blood supplies requires the development of a nationally coordinated blood transfusion service based on voluntary non-remunerated blood donations. However, in many countries, blood services face the challenge of making sufficient blood available, while also ensuring its quality and safety.

## Focus of this year's campaign

The lives and health of millions of people are affected by emergencies every year. In the last decade, disasters have caused more than 1 million deaths, with more than 250 million people being affected by emergencies every year. Natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods and storms create considerable needs for emergency health care, while at the same time, often destroying vital health facilities as well. Man-made disasters such as road accidents and armed conflicts also generate substantial health care demands and the need for front-line treatment.

Blood transfusion is an essential component of emergency health care. Emergencies increase the demand for blood transfusion and make its delivery challenging and complex. Adequate supply of blood during emergencies requires a well-organized blood service, and this can only be ensured by engaging the entire community and a blood donor population committed to voluntary unpaid blood donation throughout the year.

This year's campaign will therefore focus on blood donation in emergencies. In any crisis or emergency situation, the natural human response is "What can I do? How can I help?" therefore, the slogan for the 2017 campaign is:

**"What can you do?",** with the secondary message **"Give blood. Give now. Give often"**.

The campaign underlines the role every single person can play in helping others in emergency situations, by giving the valuable gift of blood. It also focuses on the fact that it is important to give blood regularly, so that the blood stock is sufficient *before* an emergency arises.

## The objectives of this year's campaign

The main objectives of WBDD 2017 are:

- ◆ to encourage all people to strengthen the emergency preparedness of health services in their community by donating blood;
- ◆ to engage authorities in the establishment of effective national blood donor programmes with the capacity to respond promptly to the increase in blood demand during emergencies;
- ◆ to promote the inclusion of blood transfusion services in national emergency preparedness and response activities;
- ◆ to build wider public awareness of the need for committed, year-round blood donation, in order to maintain adequate supplies and achieve a national self-sufficiency of blood;
- ◆ to celebrate and thank individuals who donate blood regularly and to encourage young people to become new donors as well;
- ◆ to promote international collaboration and to ensure worldwide dissemination of and consensus on the principles of voluntary non-remunerated donation, while increasing blood safety and availability.

## Host for this year's World Blood Donor Day events

The host country for the global event of World Blood Donor Day 2017 is Viet Nam through its National Institute of Haematology and Blood Transfusion (NIHBT). The Global event will be held in Hanoi on 14 June 2017.

**Campaign web site:** <http://www.who.int/campaigns/world-blood-donor-day/2017/en/>

