Recruiting your colleagues to donate blood.

*Attracting new donors*

Blood donors are our heroes. More than 425,000 Canadians are dedicated blood donors. While we are proud and appreciative of their efforts, we need others to join them. In Canada, we must attract new donors and encourage a life-long giving habit.

Here's how you can start recruiting donors:

1. **Appeal to their emotions.**

   Many of us probably know someone or have a loved one who has benefited from donated blood. Using *testimonials from people who have needed blood* can be an effective way to describe how donating blood saves lives. These are available from your local Canadian Blood Services contact.

   As well, a primary fact that can be effective in recruiting donors is that *one unit of donated blood can save a life*. This clearly illustrates the direct and positive impact that donors can have on the lives of those in need.

2. **Illustrate a genuine need.**

   You can recruit donors by describing to them the need for blood, and how it continually grows. Approximately every minute of every day, someone in Canada needs blood. That is a very powerful thought.

   Blood and blood products have a “shelf life,” limiting when they can be given to a recipient. For example, a unit of whole blood can be used for only 35 days after it is donated. With that in mind, our blood supply needs to be continually refreshed in order to keep up with the demand.

   (For stats on the growing need for blood or the shelf life of other blood products, visit [www.blood.ca](http://www.blood.ca).)

3. **Explain how easy it is to donate blood.**

   If you explain to your donors how easy it actually is to donate (since the entire process only takes about one hour of their time), they might change their minds. Refer to the section on the “Donation Process” to describe the process.
4. Encourage your colleagues to work together.

By deciding to donate blood, your group will support and encourage each other since you are saving more lives collectively than by donating alone.

5. Give them the facts.

Your colleagues will have many questions about how the blood donation process actually works. You can direct them to www.blood.ca for more information or contact your local Canadian Blood Services representative, who can help prepare some promotional materials and provide brochures to help support your efforts. You can also direct them to 1 888 2 DONATE (1-888-236-6283) to talk to a nurse about any questions they may have. They can also call this number to schedule an appointment to donate.

6. Reasons people don’t donate:

Our research points to some of the most common reasons why people don't donate:

**Time** — People feel they don’t have the time to donate, but you can help give them a better understanding of the process and inform them that it only takes about an hour to make a donation. Focus on encouraging them to give it a try just one time, they might feel differently at the end of it.

**Convenience** — Your colleagues can access www.blood.ca or call 1 888 2 DONATE (1-888-236-6283) to find out about donor clinic locations and times that might work better for them.

**Awareness** — Many people are not aware of the constant need for blood. As a Partners for Life champion, you can help by telling them that the need is very real and ongoing. You can make all the difference in the world by raising awareness and bringing new blood donors into Canada’s pool of available and regular blood donors.

**Perception** — Many people say they were never asked or invited to donate. Help us extend this invitation and let them know that their participation in Canada’s blood program is very much needed.

**Fear** — This is rarely mentioned explicitly, although we do know that about 15 per cent of the general public is afraid of needles. We have found that blood donors can overcome the fear once the donation process is explained and they understand how important it is to donate blood. Canadian Blood Services’ clinic staff will take special care and spend more time to make first-time donors feel very comfortable. There is also a Donor Ambassador volunteer available at many clinics, who can walk a first-time donor through the process.
Tips and Pointers:

- Ask senior management to help get the word out and support blood donations during regular work hours.

- Promote blood donation by using both Canadian Blood Services promotional tools as well as your own internal promotional vehicles (newsletters, bulletin boards, pay stuffers, email notices, etc.)

- If your workplace is large ask other departments to help identify captains for those areas to support you.

- Share the Champion Toolkit resources with captains so they are equally informed.

- Report back to your captains and colleagues on your group’s success.

- Celebrate your achievements as a group.

Now you have all the information necessary to successfully educate people about the need for blood and blood donation. But you need something else that’s equally important...heart. *Partners for Life* Champions make all the difference.

Be enthusiastic — it’s contagious. Armed with enthusiasm, information and promotional materials, you can communicate the need, inform potential donors where they can make their donation and celebrate when your workplace achieves its donation goal.

Thank you for stepping up to help recruit blood donors from among your co-workers!