

World Blood Donor Day 2018

Every year, on 14 June, countries around the world celebrate World Blood Donor Day. The event serves to thank voluntary, unpaid blood donors for their life-saving gifts of blood and to raise awareness of the need for regular blood donations to ensure the quality, safety and availability of blood and blood products for patients in need.

Transfusion of blood and blood products helps save millions of lives every year. 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. It also has an essential, life-saving role in maternal and child care and during the emergency response to man-made and natural disasters.

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. An adequate supply can only be ensured through regular donations by voluntary, unpaid blood donors. 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 theme of this year's campaign is blood donation as an action of solidarity. It highlights the fundamental human values of altruism, respect, empathy and kindness which underline and sustain voluntary unpaid blood donation systems. We have adopted the slogan, **"Be there for someone else. Give blood. Share life"**, to draw attention to the roles that voluntary donation systems play in encouraging people to care for one another and generate social ties and a united community.

The campaign aims to highlight stories of people whose lives have been saved through blood donation, as a way of motivating regular blood donors to continue giving blood, and to motivate people in good health who have never given blood to begin doing so, particularly young people.

Activities may include commemorative events, meetings, publication of relevant stories, scientific conferences, publication of articles in national, regional and international scientific journals, and other activities that would help in promoting the theme of this year's World Blood Donor Day.

The objectives of this year's campaign

The main objectives of WBDD 2018 are:

- ◆ to celebrate and thank individuals who donate blood and to encourage those who have not yet donated blood to start donating;
- ◆ to raise wider awareness that blood donation is an altruistic action that benefits all of society and that an adequate supply can only be ensured through regular donations by voluntary, unpaid blood donors;
- ◆ to highlight the need for committed, year-round blood donation, in order to maintain adequate supplies and achieve national self-sufficiency of blood;
- ◆ to focus attention on blood donation as an expression of community participation in the health system, and the importance of community participation in maintaining sufficient, safe and sustainable blood supplies;
- ◆ 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 2018 is Greece, through the Hellenic National Blood Centre, in the city of Athens.



For the Region of the Americas, the host country is the Dominican Republic. This gesture recognizes the efforts made in recent years by this country in the field of the organization of blood services, with the creation of the first regional blood center in the country that seeks to strengthen the integrated networks of blood services to guarantee the availability and timely access to safe blood for all the population that requires it.

For further information please visit the webpage of World Blood Donor Day 2018:
<http://www.paho.org/wbdd2018>