

# DONATING Blood *Is Now Easier*



**T**he list of reasons why eligible donors should give blood just received a new addition: Children's Bloodmobile is making it easier. This fall, the Bloodmobile will begin making two trips a week to locations in the District of Columbia and trips to locations in Maryland and Virginia within the next year.

"Despite a clear need for blood donations, statistics show that 95 percent of eligible blood donors don't give," said Matthew Alsante, manager of Children's Blood Donor Center. At least in the District, inconvenience can no longer deter others giving the gift of blood donation. Thanks to Alsante and his team, all it takes is a phone call, the courage to withstand a slight prick and a little bit of your time.

Children's is growing and needs more blood than ever. Babies undergoing heart surgery need blood that is no more than five days old. Countless numbers of children involved in accidents need blood transfusions almost immediately. Some children with certain medical conditions, such as sickle cell anemia, need one to 10 units of blood per month.

In a pediatric setting, your blood goes a long way. For premature babies, for example, a single unit of blood can provide as many as 25 transfusions. Remember; however, that most pediatric patients require more than one unit of blood per transfusion. Children's has a Transfusion Buddy Program that helps with some of these pressing needs, but it doesn't take care of all of them. That's where you come in.

With the Bloodmobile, you can call and schedule a trip to your business, community center, place of worship, etc. Please ensure you have at least 20 people willing to donate, and Children's will send the Bloodmobile to your location so you don't have to take extra time to come to the hospital. If you prefer to come to the hospital or don't want to donate as a group, you can also donate at the hospital.

Ultimately, when deciding whether you will give blood, perhaps this fact is the most important thing to keep in mind – 90 percent of people need a blood donation at some point in their lives. You, or your child, could be one of them.

If you're unsure whether you are eligible to give blood, the general rule is that if you weigh more than 110 pounds, are healthy and between the ages of 17 and 70, you probably can donate.

If you are eligible, you can donate blood as often as every 56 days, and you can donate platelets once a month. To schedule a visit from the Bloodmobile or an appointment with the Blood Donor Center, call 202-884-KIDS. 🐾

