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## BLOOD DONATION TO CONTINUE AS AN ESSENTIAL SERVICE

24 MARCH 2020

The South African National Blood Service (SANBS) welcomes the necessary measures announced by the President, His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa, on Monday evening, to save lives and slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

This should not discourage members of the public from donating lifesaving blood as we tackle this global health pandemic as a nation during this difficult period when our country needs you the most.

As an essential service within South Africa, the SANBS therefore appeals to donors from all blood groups to continue donating blood to prevent blood stocks running critically low and placing the lives of our fellow South African at risk.

All of our donor centres will remain open with extended operating hours to accommodate social distancing measures.

Our extended operating hours will be between 08:00 to 19:00 on weekdays and 08:00 to 14:00 on weekends. Shopping mall donor centres remain accessible, and mobile drives will be set up at large grocery stores to accommodate more donors. Appointments can be made directly with your nearest donor centre to avoid queuing at the donor centre.

The SANBS has taken precautionary measures to ensure that the people who utilise our facilities are protected. We are assessing donors at all entry point to our facilities and mobile sites. We have also equipped all sites with additional antiseptic sprays and alcohol-based wipes.

"Our trained healthcare practitioners operating in the field have been equipped with the necessary information to identify symptoms that may indicate COVID-19 infection, and should a donor not be feeling well, or exhibit any flu-like symptoms or signs of infection, they will not be permitted access our facilities," said Dr Jackie Thomson, SANBS Medical Director.

While travel to our various donor centres will be considered essential travel, our regular donor deferral periods will still apply. Additionally, as precautionary measures and to ensure the safety of blood and blood products during this time, the following deferrals remain in effect:

Universal Blood Type:



Donates to .....Everyone

Receives from .....

[sanbs.org.za](http://sanbs.org.za)  
Toll free 0800 11 9031

Board of Directors: Executives: J Louw (CEO), J Thomson (Medical Director) Non-Executives: G Simelane (Chairman), R Brand, F Burn, W Gumede, P Knox, V Moodley, P Mthethwa, A Ramalho, R Theunissen,  
Company Secretary: M Luthuli  
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- people who have travelled to affected countries outside of South Africa will be **deferred for 21 days**,
- people with **confirmed cases of Coronavirus infection** will be **deferred for 28 days from the date of complete clearance of symptoms**, and
- people who have been in **close contact with confirmed or probable Coronavirus** cases will be **deferred for 21 days** from the last date of contact.

Importantly, as is normal practice when donating blood, we encourage donors to delay donation if they are exhibiting any flu-like symptoms or signs of infection until they are in good health.

During this difficult time let us heed the call of our President: "In the days, weeks and months ahead, our resolve, our resourcefulness and our unity as a nation will be tested as never before. I call upon all of us, one and all, to play our part. To be courageous, to be patient and above all, to show compassion."

We can all play our part to save a life by donating blood.

Ends

## About the SANBS

The South African National Blood Service (SANBS) is an independent non-profit organization, and one of the leaders in the discipline of blood transfusion. SANBS operates in eight out of nine provinces in South Africa (with the exception of the Western Cape, which is serviced by the Western Province Blood Transfusion Service). It also provides crucial support to countries in the SADC region.

SANBS supplies over one million blood products annually and is rated among the top blood services in the world. This pedigree comes, as a result of world-class testing and collection protocols which ensure that the blood which is transfused is always of top quality.

The blood is processed into its constituent components; red blood cells, plasma and platelets therefore in principle a single blood donation can save a minimum of three lives.

Universal Blood Type:



Donates to .....Everyone

Receives from .....