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UPDATE ON THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) OUTBREAK AND BLOOD SAFETY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

11 MARCH 2020

The outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) has understandably left many of us feeling concerned and anxious about how we will be affected. This challenging time calls us all to unite in the drive to keep our nation healthy by supporting our government and the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD).

“It is important to know that there is presently no evidence that supports that COVID-19 can be transmitted through blood. Blood cells lack the binding sites required by COVID-19. Diagnostic tests for COVID-19 are not done on blood but on throat swabs and sputum samples,” reinforced Dr Jackie Thomson, Medical Director of South African National Blood Service (SANBS).

At the SANBS, we are closely following guidelines issued by the NICD which promote healthy personal hygiene practices – both in our offices and at our fixed and mobile donor centres. We encourage everyone to take the necessary precautions to ensure the safety of fellow citizens. If you are feeling unwell or exhibiting any clinical symptoms of infection (fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat and shortness of breath), you are encouraged to delay donation until you are in good health.

Precautionary deferrals

As precautionary measures and to ensure the safety of blood and blood products,

- 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

Universal Blood Type:



Donates toEveryone

Receives from

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 been in close contact with confirmed or probable Coronavirus cases will be deferred for **21 days** from the last date of contact.

Our donor centres remain operational across the country. The situation with the outbreak is still developing and we will keep you informed on all issues affecting you. Feel free to speak to our qualified staff at donation centres or call our Customer Services Centre on 0800 119 031, if you have any questions or concerns.

If you feel you are at risk or fear that you may have been infected with COVID-19, urgently contact the toll-free NICD hotline on 0800 029 999.

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:



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