

SANBS not able to meet the demand for blood products if blood donations don't increase

The South African National Blood Service (SANBS) is appealing to the public to donate blood and boost blood supply ahead of the Christmas weekend with stock levels currently at a critically low level.

"During the holiday period, we do not have access to schools, universities, and many corporates which traditionally make up a large proportion of the sites where regular blood donors donate. This causes a decrease in blood donations whilst the usage of blood in hospitals only decreases slightly," says Ravi Reddy, SANBS CEO.

Ravi adds that while the slight decrease is due to fewer elective surgeries that take place, all other required blood transfusions continue over this period, and SANBS would not be able to fulfil all the requests received by hospitals if blood donations did not increase.

He said that blood donations had been impacted significantly over the past two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown that limited access to regular blood drive venues. The current fourth wave of the Covid pandemic has again significantly impacted blood donations and blood supply.

"We are appealing to South Africans to please donate as we have blood drives planned around the country in our fixed donor centres and shopping malls to give people enough opportunity to give the much-needed blood."

"COVID-19 protocols continue to be followed to ensure the safety of all donors and SANBS staff, while both vaccinated and unvaccinated donors will be allowed as their vaccine status has no impact on the blood that they will be donating," adds Ravi.

To become a blood donor, you must:

- Be between the ages of 16 and 75 years.
- Weigh 50kg or more.
- Be in good health.
- Lead a healthy lifestyle.
- Consider your blood safe for transfusion to a patient.

To find out more about where you can donate blood, visit www.sanbs.org.za or call 0800 11 90 31. Connect with us on Twitter (@theSANBS), Facebook (@SANBS), and Instagram (@thesanbs).

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About the SANBS

The South African National Blood Service (SANBS) is an independent non-profit organisation, and one of the leaders in the discipline of blood transfusion. SANBS operates in eight out of nine provinces in South Africa (except for the Western Cape, which is serviced by the Western Cape Blood 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 that 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 up to three lives.