



WE NEED BLOOD DONORS

In this section of the unit we focus on the work of the New Zealand Blood Service. We consider the need to raise community awareness about blood donation and encourage people to give the gift of life as a blood donor.



New Zealand Blood Service
The gift of life

Why Do People Need Extra Blood?

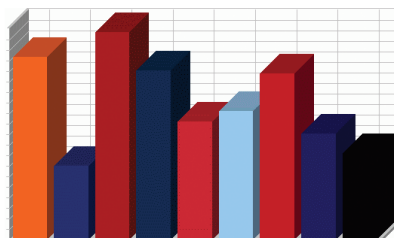


- Tell students that there are times when it is necessary for people to 'top up their blood' and this is called a 'blood transfusion' – it is a little like topping up the radiator of a car with water. Can students think of any circumstances that will require that people need to be given a blood transfusion? eg
 - after losing blood through bleeding after a serious cut or motor accident
 - during an operation (surgery)
 - some people may have a blood disorder or help fight a disease such as cancer
- Have any students had a blood transfusion or know of any person who has had a blood transfusion?
- Give students the following information:
 - 8 out of every 10 people (80%) will need blood or a blood product some time during their life
 - the New Zealand Blood Service needs over 3100 donations of blood every week and sometimes they just don't get enough
 - donated blood is only stored for 35 days so a regular supply is needed
 - people who give blood are called blood donors
 - blood donors must be in good health, aged between 16-70 years and weigh over 50kg.

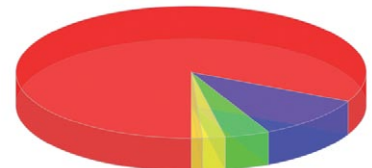
Donors Community Survey



- Help students prepare and design forms/questionnaires to survey their older friends, family and local community to find out how many people:
 - have ever needed a blood transfusion
 - have donated blood at least once
 - are regular blood donors and how often do they donate their blood
 - believes that donating blood is a good idea and why do they think this
 - intend becoming a blood donor in the future
 - have never given blood and what reason do they have for never donating blood.
- In groups, collate survey results. Discuss the most suitable ways their results could be displayed eg in bar/pie graph format or tables.



bar graphs, pie graphs, line graphs, tables etc. are good ways to display information



- Relate the answers to each question asked to the number of people asked and then expressed as a percentage
- Combine whole class survey results and present in graphic form.

Just What Have We Found Out?

- Spend time analysing the survey results. What 'wise' statements can the students make from the data collected? eg
 - '95 percent of people asked thought that giving blood was a good thing to do but only 5 percent of those people surveyed had ever done so'.
- Tell the students that only 4% of people in New Zealand are blood donors. Are they surprised to hear this? How does this compare with their survey and the total class results?
- Tell students that this is the problem that the New Zealand Blood Service has – 80% will need blood and yet only 4% donate it.



How Can We Motivate People to Help?

- To motivate students to help, visit the website of the New Zealand Blood Service at: www.nzblood.co.nz > **Scroll down the homepage and find 'Unsung Heroes > Click on Blood Donations Saved 10-year- old Rupert Gyton's life.** Print out and distribute for shared reading. eg
 - ask students to list their heroes (sports stars, etc)
 - why do they consider these people to be heroes?
 - why does Rupert call about 24 people he has never even met or know the names of his heroes?
 - what would have been the consequences for Rupert if he had not got the blood he needed?
 - what is meant by the most precious gift of all and how do people who give blood give this gift?
 - how long does the body take to replace any blood given?
- Focus on the reasons that people surveyed gave for not having given blood – even if they intend to do so some time in the future. List all reasons given. Does this give us any ideas of how we can help the New Zealand Blood Service get the message across to people to donate blood. Groups brainstorm and report back.





GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT

Let's Look at the Excuses

- Remind students that most people strongly agree that giving blood is a good thing so what do they think their excuses are?
- Tell students that the following are some of the most common excuses people use for not giving blood and answers the New Zealand Blood Service gives.



Excuse: **"I'm too old to give blood."**

Answer: If you are between 16-74 years and in good health – you can donate.

Excuse: **"Nobody has ever asked me."**

Answer: We need more blood donors so please consider yourself invited



Excuse: **"I'm too busy and it's inconvenient."**

Answer: It only takes around one hour every three months.



Excuse: **"It will make me weak."**

Answer: After a short rest and a snack you will be able to take part in normal activities.



Excuse: **"I'm too small."**

Answer: Not if you weigh 50kgs or more

Excuse: **"You wouldn't want my blood. I'm common 'O' group."**

Answer: We constantly need donors of all blood groups.



Excuse: **"I've recently been ill or I'm on medication."**

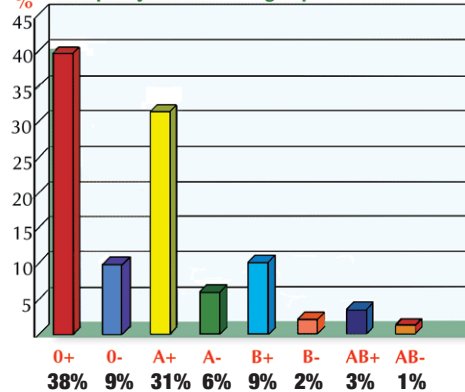
Answers: Wait until you are well again. If in doubt, contact our medical staff. 'Many people on medication can still be accepted as blood donors. If in doubt, contact us.'

- Tell students that knowing the excuses will help them be able to answer any doubts that people can have about donating blood.

Asking the Experts

- Invite a blood donor to the classroom to talk about ...
 - the reasons they have for giving blood
 - how they feel about giving blood
- Invite a representative of your local Blood Donor Service and/or a health professional to talk to the class about the physical process of donating blood and how people can go about it. Also ask about:
 - how long it takes
 - where do people go to donate blood
 - how will the collected blood be used
 - how do people feel about donating blood and the common reasons people have for donating blood.
 - any restrictions
- Ask the health professional to explain the 8 different types of blood and how common or rare they are. Also find out just who can receive different types of blood and how they help.

Frequency of the 8 blood groups in New Zealand



- Have the expert explain different blood products, eg red cells, platelets, plasma. What is each product used to treat?

How Can We All Help – Running a Campaign

- Now students have a greater knowledge of the problem and greater knowledge about the process of donating blood, have groups brainstorm and list as many ideas as possible for planning an effective publicity campaign for your local school community. Accept all ideas – no matter how impractical. These can be refined later!
- Introduce the idea that a multi-pronged attack on the problem can produce the best result. Make a list of all the projects that individuals and groups will carry out. During the campaign, run regular evaluation sessions and change direction if necessary.

Campaign Ideas and Further Directions

- Support an existing campaign being run by your local Blood Donor Service – contact them
- arrange a visit to the local Blood Donor Centre
- prepare and distribute an informative flyer
- approach your local community newspaper and radio station and ask for their support
- plan a 'Blood Information Day' at school where health professionals, local Blood Centre representatives and blood donors (including high school students) can speak to parents.
- design a blood pledge card or contract and encourage parents and older friends to sign
- encourage family members to visit the *Unsung Heroes* section of www.nzblood.co.nz and read the articles
- design 'Become a Hero – Donate Blood' posters and ask local shops to display these
- design a special web page for the class or school website pointing out the benefits of donating blood and blood facts and figures
- write letters to the local newspaper
- organise a peaceful 'Action for Blood' march around your local area or shopping centre to get the message out and hand out pledge cards
- invent attention-drawing slogans that can be used as bumper/car window stickers and for fridge labels.
- run regular surveys to find out who will now give blood.