

## *Tips for a Good Donation Experience*

### **Before Donating:**

- ⇒ Get a good night's sleep
- ⇒ Have a good breakfast or lunch
- ⇒ Drink extra water and fluids to replace the volume you will donate (avoid tea, coffee, or other beverages with caffeine)
- ⇒ Eat iron-rich foods — red meat, fish, poultry or liver, beans, iron-fortified cereals, raisins and prunes
- ⇒ Avoid fatty foods, such as hamburgers, fries, or ice cream before donating. Tests for infections done on all donated blood can be affected by fatty materials — lipids — that appear in your blood for several hours after eating fatty foods. When this occurs and required testing cannot be performed, the blood may need to be discarded.

### **During the Donation:**

- ⇒ Wear clothing with sleeves that can be raised above the elbow
- ⇒ Show the staff any "good veins" that have been used successfully in the past to draw blood
- ⇒ Relax
- ⇒ Take the time to enjoy a snack and a drink in the refreshments area immediately after donating

### **After Donation:**

- ⇒ Rehydrate by drinking plenty of fluids over the next 24-48 hours
  - ⇒ Avoid strenuous physical activity or heavy lifting for about five hours after donation
  - ⇒ If you feel light headed, lie down, preferably with feet elevated, until the feeling passes
  - ⇒ In rare cases when bleeding occurs after removing the bandage, apply pressure to the site and raise your arm for 3-5 minutes; if bleeding or bruising occurs under the skin, apply a cold pack to the area periodically during the first 24 hours
  - ⇒ If for any reason, something doesn't feel right, call the American Red Cross toll free number provided to you after your donation
- ➔ **Enjoy the good feeling that comes with knowing that you may have saved as many as three lives.**

*"I couldn't help people by making a financial donation. So I figured, 'Hey, I have plenty of blood... I'll donate that.'"*

— *Ethan*

(reprinted from [www.givelife.org](http://www.givelife.org))