



A Lifeline – 9 interesting facts about blood

Blood is the life-giving fluid that delivers oxygen to the cells of the body. Although your blood pumps around your body without you even thinking about it, you wouldn't be here without it. Here are 9 interesting facts about blood that you might not know about.

1. There are four main blood groups

The four main blood groups are A, B, AB and O. The Rh factor (protein on red blood cells) determines whether you're positive or negative. If you're Rh positive and blood group A, then you're A positive. If you're Rh negative and blood group A, then you're A negative. It's important to know your blood type for medical emergencies, pregnancy, donating and risk of disease, as studies suggest that people with specific blood types might be more susceptible to certain diseases.

2. Blood cells have different life spans

Matured human blood cells have varying life cycles. Red blood cells circulate in the body for about four months, platelets for about nine days and white blood cells range from a few hours to several days.

3. Blood cells originate from stem cells

In humans, all blood cells originate from hematopoietic stem cells. About 95% of the body's blood cells are produced in the bone marrow. In adults, most of the bone marrow is concentrated in the breastbone and in the bones of the spine and pelvis. Several other organs help to regulate the production of blood cells. These include the liver and lymphatic structures such as the lymph nodes, spleen and thymus.

4. Donating blood saves lives

Blood transfusions and blood products save millions of lives every year, and aid in recovery in patients who are ill or injured, have undergone major surgery or had problems during childbirth. Your donation could help someone in need. The theme of World Blood Donor Day this year on 14 June was Blood donation and universal access to safe blood transfusion, with the thinking that "by giving blood and sharing life", you're willingly caring for someone else and subtly knitting together a community.

5. Blood transfusions differ around the world

In low-income countries, at least 65% of blood transfusions are administered to children under the age of five years old (most in pregnancy related complications and severe childhood anaemia. In high-income countries, around 75% of those receiving blood transfusions are over 65 years old (most for support in cardiovascular surgery, transplant surgery and massive trauma).

6. How does blood type affect pregnancy?

It's important for women to find out their blood type and Rh factor at the start of their pregnancy. If the baby does not have the same Rh factor as the mother, this could result in incompatibility. It will also influence the antibodies the mother's body makes as an immune response to foreign matter in her body such as bacteria, sperm and even an embryo.

7. There's gold in your blood

Human blood contains metal atoms including iron, chromium, manganese, zinc, lead and copper. You may also be surprised to know that blood contains small amounts of gold. The human body has about 0.2 milligrams of gold, which is mostly found in the blood.

8. Not all blood is red

While humans have red coloured blood, other organisms have blood of varying colours. Crustaceans, squid, octopuses, and some arthropods have blue blood. Some types of worms and leeches have green blood and insects – including beetles and butterflies – have colorless or pale-yellowish blood.

9. Your body contains about 5 litres of blood

The adult human body contains approximately 4.5 to 5 litres of blood. The blood circulating in your body is composed of about 55% plasma, 40% red blood cells, 4% platelets and 1% white blood cells. Blood makes up about 7 to 8 percent of a person's total body weight.

"Although it's fascinating to learn interesting facts about aspects of your body, such as blood, it's much more important to focus on how this information could help other people. Whether donating blood is something you do regularly, or whether you've only considered it, think about the positive repercussions that will happen from one action from you. Just by making the decision to donate blood, you could save countless lives."

David van der Knaap, CEO OracleMed Health



For any further information please contact
David van der Knaap CEO, OracleMed Health (Pty) Ltd.
Tel: +27 82 892 9555 or e-mail: david@oraclemed.com