

Message from
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WHO EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION
ON THE OCCASION OF
WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY

Cairo, Egypt, 14 June 2021

Give blood and keep the world beating

Every year on 14 June, countries around the world celebrate World Blood Donor Day. This year's campaign, which once again takes place during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlights the essential contribution of blood donations by young people in saving lives and improving the health of their communities. Young people form a large sector of the population in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region. Their idealism, enthusiasm and creativity support initiatives aimed at achieving safe blood supplies through voluntary, unpaid blood donations.

Safe blood is critical to save millions of lives every year, whether in normal times or emergencies. It can help in the proper management of women suffering from bleeding associated with pregnancy and childbirth; children suffering from severe anaemia; patients with inherited disorders such as thalassemia; and victims of trauma due to natural or man-made disasters.

But while the need for safe blood is universal, access remains a privilege. Most low- and middle-income countries in the Region struggle to make enough blood available while ensuring its quality and safety, especially during emergencies. That includes the current COVID-19 pandemic, which has seen blood donations fall by as much as half in some countries. Blood donation across the Region, especially by young people, is essential to ensure that individuals and communities have access to blood at all times, as an integral part of health care delivery.

An adequate blood supply can only be ensured through regular donations by voluntary and unpaid blood donors. World Blood Donor Day serves to thank these donors for their life-saving gifts of blood and to raise awareness of the universal need for safe blood in the delivery of health care. Each individual blood donor can make a crucial contribution to help others in their community.

In line with WHO's vision of Health for All by All in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, and our regional strategic framework for blood safety and availability, I call on our Member States to improve access to blood as part of universal health coverage. Member States need to provide adequate resources and put in place systems and infrastructure to increase the collection of blood from voluntary, regular unpaid blood donors; provide quality donor care; promote and implement appropriate clinical use of blood; and set up systems for oversight and surveillance across the blood supply and transfusion chain.

Through the campaign, WHO calls on all countries in the Region to celebrate and thank individuals who donate blood, and to encourage everyone, especially young people who have not yet donated blood, to start donating to make access to safe blood a reality for everyone in need, especially during the pandemic.

“Give blood and keep the world beating.”

Thank you.