



# Coastal Bend Blood Center

*Giving so that others may live*

## **Blood Drive Planning Guide**



# Thank You

On behalf of the Coastal Bend Blood Center we would like to extend our sincerest appreciation to you for joining us in our mission to save lives here in the Coastal Bend. It is the support and dedication of our many volunteers that help make our mission a reality for patients across the region. Whether you volunteered for the role of blood drive coordinator or were selected, you are now a key link between your organization and people of the Coastal Bend in need of blood.

We know that you want your blood drive to be a success and we want to help you make it one. The following guide is meant to serve as a tool to assist you with the process of organizing and carrying out your blood drive. As you become more proficient and devise your own ways to ensure your success, this booklet may be used to educate those working with you in the preparation of your blood drive or saved for others who may assume the role of blood drive coordinator in the future.

Above all, please remember you are making a significant difference in your community by joining in this life-saving effort and for that we are truly thankful.



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# Table of Contents

<b>Understanding Our Mission</b>	3
<b>Getting the Best Results</b>	4-7
<b>A Timeline Overview</b>	8
<b>Eight Weeks to Success</b>	9-12
6-8 weeks prior to your drive	9
3-6 weeks prior to your drive	10
2-3 weeks prior to your drive	11
1 week prior to your drive	11
The day of your drive	12
Following your drive	12
<b>Frequently Asked Questions</b>	13-14
<b>Top 10 Tips</b>	15



## Fast Facts

The Coastal Bend Blood Center relies on approximately 30,000 altruistic individuals who annually serve as volunteer donors.

# Understanding Our Mission

Did you know, every three seconds someone in the United States needs blood? That's about 32,000 units of blood a day and over 11 million units of blood a year. Despite the size of the need, less than 4% of the population currently volunteer as blood donors.

Your efforts along with others in your organization will help to bridge the gap between our community's blood needs and blood supply.

## The Power of One

A single donation—one unit of blood—can help save as many as three lives.

## The Importance of You

As blood drive coordinator you are able to play a key role in the success of your organization's blood drive efforts. In your role you serve as both an educator and a motivator, while ensuring donors have a positive experience that will lead them to donate again.

## Making a Difference Together

- Six blood donors can provide the blood needed for one heart surgery patient.
- 20 blood donors can provide the platelets needed for one burn victim.
- 50 blood donors can provide the blood needed to care for victims of a car accident.

# Getting the Best Results

## Set a Realistic Goal

If your organization has previously held a blood drive, you can use the turnout from that drive as a basis for setting future goals. Consider what factors went into that drive that may have influenced the results, for example the time and date of the drive. Also, evaluate what could be done differently to increase participation, such as increasing publicity efforts.

If this is your organization's first blood drive your blood center recruiter can help you establish a realistic goal.

## Have a Strong Recruitment Team

To help ensure the success of your blood drive it is important to incorporate the support of other members of your organization. It can be difficult for one person to recruit all potential donors, especially within large organizations.

When choosing assistance, look for individuals who share your enthusiasm. In addition, you should try to have one recruiter for every 25 people within your organization. Consider having a kick-off meeting to get your fellow recruiters excited about the coming event, distribute materials such as sign-up sheets and brainstorm ideas for promoting the event.

## Helpful Hints

Speak with the leaders of your organization and get their support for the blood drive. Consider having them distribute a memo, send out an email or make an announcement during a meeting relaying their support and encouraging members of your organization to participate.

## Create a Communication Plan

While it may sound like a time consuming or unnecessary task, taking the time to create a communication plan for the event will pay off in the long run. It does not have to be a highly detailed document but should, at the least, include the variety of methods you plan to use to promote the event and a timeline for carrying them out.

In order to raise awareness of the blood drive and peak the interest of potential donors it is best to incorporate a variety of different communication tactics. Perhaps get things started with an email, memo or bulletin announcing the upcoming event. Follow up with a personal story regarding how blood products have positively impacted the life of someone from within your organization or ask your blood center recruiter for a story you can use.

## Helpful Hints

Remember that the blood center staff is there to support you in your recruitment efforts. Contact your blood center recruiter if you are interested in obtaining blurbs for newsletters or bulletins. Your blood center recruiter can also assist you in obtaining special promotional materials, such as table tents for your organization's cafeteria or break room.

As the date for the blood drive draws closer, you can post the flyers and posters provided by the blood center staff. Consider whether or not there is a holiday or special event that is going on in conjunction with your blood drive. Use this to incorporate a theme, for example Mardi Gras, Valentine's Day or Halloween.



## Fast Facts

The average adult has 10 pints of blood in his or her body; a newborn baby has about one cup.

## Provide the Motivation to Give

Conveying the importance of blood donation to your potential donors will likely be your most rewarding and most difficult task.

If everyone understood that blood donation is one of the simplest ways to make a significant, positive impact in the lives of others in the Coastal Bend, your job as blood drive coordinator would probably not exist.

However, because so many do not yet realize this fact, your job as blood drive coordinator will be to educate and motivate them.

*Describe the current need for blood in the Coastal Bend.* Currently, we need between 100-150 units of blood a day to sustain the blood supply for patients in our area. The Coastal Bend Blood Center provides blood and blood products to 12 medical facilities in ten counties.

*Use personal stories.* The blood center staff can provide you with handouts and information regarding actual blood/blood product recipient success stories. You should also check with fellow members of your organization to see if any of them has a story they may be willing to share.

## Helpful Hints

If you do not have a story to share, have potential donors imagine themselves in a situation in which one of their family members was in need of blood and the supply was not available. Evoke empathy within potential donors and help them to see the impact their donation can have on the lives of others.

*Provide incentives.* Many times simply recognizing your fellow organization members is thanks enough. However, incentives can offer an extra way to show appreciation to donors. Try to be creative; special incentives don't always have to cost money. Consider hosting a raffle of everyone that tried to donate during your drive and give away a designated parking space for a

month, or if your organization has a specific dress code, offer a free casual day to all who try to participate in your blood drive.

### *Important Note Regarding Incentives:*

The FDA has specific guidelines regarding what types of incentives are considered acceptable for blood donors. Please consult with your blood center recruiter if you are unsure.

# A Timeline Overview

## Communication is the Key

While it is important to maintain contact with your blood center recruiter throughout the blood drive planning process, there are a couple of key checkpoints along the way that are particularly important.

### 4-8 weeks prior to your blood drive

Meet with your blood center recruiter to discuss the location site, drive goals, materials and procedures.

### 3 weeks prior to your blood drive

Keep track of your donor sign-up lists and relay the information to your blood center recruiter to ensure the appropriate amount of staff, time, space and equipment are designated for your drive.

### The day of your blood drive

Touch base with your blood center recruiter to make sure everything is going according to plan and that no additional assistance is necessary.

### Following your blood drive

Take time to discuss the results of your drive with your blood center recruiter. Evaluate the event and make plans for future drives.



## Fast Facts

Donated red blood cells must be used within 42 days of collection; platelets must be used within five days of collection; plasma can be frozen and must be used within one year.

# Eight Weeks to Success

## Start With the Basics:

### Set a Date

Think ahead two to three months. Does your organization have certain busy periods to avoid, are there any holidays coming up that may help or hurt your turnout, do you need to account for split shifts? You should choose a date and time that is most convenient for both your organization and potential donors. Planning ahead can also increase your chances of getting a particular date.

### Helpful Hints

Remember holidays and special events can work to your advantage in promoting an upcoming blood drive (i.e. Valentine's Day and Halloween). Using the holiday as a theme can help attract potential donors.

## Move Into Action:

### Begin Organizing

(6-8 weeks before the drive)

- Review your organization's population with your blood center recruiter and estimate the level of participation you expect to get.
- Discuss logistical details associated with the actual blood drive site. If a bloodmobile will be used, proper parking must be reserved in an easily accessible location. If the drive will be held inside a building, details relating to room size, tables, chairs, room temperature, electrical outlets and lighting need to be discussed with your blood center recruiter.

## **Rally the Team: Get Others Involved**

(3-6 weeks before the drive)

- Involve key personnel or organization members by informing them of drive goals and plans. Ask for their support in promoting the event.
- Begin notifying organization members of the upcoming drive. Consider posting details on your website or sending out a save-the-date email notice. You can also contact your blood center recruiter about obtaining information to include in your organization's newsletter.
- Gather a group of recruiters from within your organization to help you publicize the event.
- Brainstorm donor recruitment ideas with your team; set individual recruitment goals. Incorporating a little friendly competition can add to the fun.

## **Helpful Hints**

Choosing to become a blood donor is a personal decision and can be a sensitive issue for some members of your organization. Be sure to remind your fellow recruiters of this fact, it is not appropriate to directly question or pressure anyone regarding their decision to donate.



## **Fast Facts**

Blood donors can make a donation once every 56 days and platelet donors can give up to 24 times per year.

## **Spread the Word: Promote the Event**

(2-3 weeks before the drive)

- Use the posters and flyers provided by the blood center in high traffic areas to promote your upcoming event. High traffic areas include cafeterias, copy rooms and bulletin boards.
- Work towards securing appointments from each potential donor. When people make appointments to donate they are more likely to participate. Appointments also keep the blood drive running smoothly. Your blood center recruiter has sign-up sheets and appointment reminder cards.
- Try to make personal contact with organization members to solicit donations. Word of mouth is still the strongest tool you have. Don't be afraid to ask. Use your recruitment team to help ensure that all potential donors

are given the opportunity to participate.

## **Focus on the Details: Make Last Minute Arrangements**

(1 week before the drive)

- Reconfirm facility arrangements for your blood drive, i.e. parking details or room reservations.
- If your location has security procedures for guests, ensure the appropriate individuals are aware of the blood center staff coming on site.
- Remind donors with appointments of the time, date and location of their appointment.
- Post signs that direct donors to the location of the blood drive.

## **The Day is Here: Enjoy the Success of Your Efforts** (the day of the drive)

- Plan to be at the donation site 15-30 minutes prior to the beginning of the blood drive to meet the blood center staff.
- Have yourself or a volunteer greet donors and direct them through the registration process.
- Keep track of appointments and contact individuals who are not present at the time of their appointment.
- Thank all participants.



### **Fast Facts**

There are over a million red blood cells  
in a single drop of blood.

## **Wrap It Up: Evaluate and Report Results** (following the drive)

- Send thank you letters to blood drive participants, whether they were able to donate or not, and any individuals who assisted with making your blood drive a reality.
- Follow up with those individuals who did not show for their appointments and encourage them to try and participate at your next drive.
- Remove all posters, flyers or other materials promoting the past event.
- Notify all organization members of the blood drive results.
- Meet with your blood center recruiter to set a date for your next blood drive.

# Frequently Asked Questions

Many blood donors have a number of questions before their first donation. Always remember questions are a good thing. The more questions a donor asks, the more they will know and, in turn, the better they can help others understand the importance of donating blood. Here is a brief look at some of the more common questions associated with blood donation.

## Why should I give blood?

Blood donors save lives. It's that simple and that important. More than four million Americans would die each year if not for blood donors. In our community alone, more than 120 people a day must donate blood in order to maintain the blood supply in the ten counties served by the Coastal Bend Blood Center.

## How can I get ready to donate?

Try to get a good night's sleep and eat a hearty

low-fat meal before you give. Also, you should avoid nicotine for at least an hour before donating. If your hemoglobin levels tend to be low, you may consider adding iron-rich foods to your diet. These foods include meats, fish and eggs. Beans, grains, nuts and green vegetables can also increase your iron intake.

## How long does a routine blood donation take?

Allow about 30 to 45 minutes for the entire process, which includes your mini-physical, donation and a brief stay in our donor area for refreshments. The actual blood donation will take only 6 to 10 minutes.

## May I donate if I'm on medications or have had a severe illness?

Many medications, including those for high blood pressure and birth control, are acceptable as long as your "mini-physical" shows that your

blood pressure, temperature and blood hemoglobin levels are okay. You usually can donate once you have completely recovered from surgery or illness. For additional questions regarding eligibility, please refer them to the blood center's main office at 361-855-4943 or 1-800-299-4943.

### Can I get HIV/AIDS by giving blood?

No. You cannot contract AIDS or any other disease from giving blood. Blood is drawn with a sterile needle, which is individually packaged and used only once. After a donation, the staff will dispose of the blood collection equipment appropriately.

### How will I feel after I give?

Most donors feel great. When you donate blood, you give less than a pint. The average adult body contains 8 to 12 pints, and the body

makes more blood constantly. Donors should avoid nicotine for 30 minutes after donating. Also, donors should drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol and caffeine for the rest of the day if possible.

### How long does blood last?

Blood is a living, perishable liquid. Blood centers can store red blood cell donations for up to 42 days, but platelet donations (the component that enables blood to clot) are viable for only five days. To make sure that our community blood supply is prepared to meet all needs, the Coastal Bend Blood Center encourages donors to give regularly, particularly in the summer and during the winter holidays.

# Top 10 Tips At A Glance

We encourage you to use this guide and the assistance of your blood center recruiter to make the most of your organization's blood drive. The following is a quick look at the top ten tips to keep in mind throughout your planning process.

- 1.** Gain the support of the leaders of your organization.
- 2.** Confirm and reconfirm all logistics for your blood drive (i.e. date, time and location)
- 3.** Work as a team; gather others from within your organization to assist you in recruiting potential donors.
- 4.** Make a point of maintaining regular contact with your blood center recruiter to keep him or her up-to-date on your recruiting progress.
- 5.** Promote, promote, promote! Look for multiple opportunities to publicize your upcoming blood drive.
- 6.** Try to schedule donor appointments for the day of the drive to reduce the number of no-shows.
- 7.** Send out reminder cards or make reminder calls to scheduled donors.
- 8.** Be creative; incorporate special themes or incentives into your event.
- 9.** Show your appreciation; thank all those who attempt to donate as well as the volunteers who helped to organize the event.
- 10.** Remember that you are an integral part of a life-saving mission!