

For immediate release

Western Cape - 3 July 2023. Blood is needed daily for patients to stay alive, so it is always in demand. It cannot be manufactured outside the body, and it has a limited shelf life.

There are various periods throughout the year when the Western Cape Blood Service (WCBS) struggle to maintain the required 5-day blood stock levels. The fluctuation in the stock levels can be ascribed to the supply and demand of blood. WCBS carefully assesses how many units of blood are needed and send out various collection teams daily to collect blood, but when the planned amount is not collected, it adds pressure to the overall supply.

The periods that typically influence the lack of supply are:

- **Winter months** - as weather is not conducive to going out, and with storms in Cape Town, they see the effects on the blood stocks. Blood donors suffer from colds and flu during this time and can subsequently not donate blood - up until 3 days after the resolution of their symptoms.
- **School and public holidays** - blood donors take a well-deserved break and don't attend their regular blood donation clinic. There are also no blood donation clinics at schools and universities as they are closed during this time.
- **Ramadan** - during the fast in the month of Ramadan, Muslim donors cannot donate blood, as it is a requirement for a donor to eat at least 3 - 4 hours prior to donating.

Aside from the periods that influence the blood supply, the demand for blood can increase when there is a rise in trauma cases or elective surgeries. Thousands of patients require a life-saving blood transfusion daily in South Africa. Aside from accident and other trauma-related transfusions, blood is also needed for patients undergoing chemotherapy; awaiting a bone marrow transplant; during childbirth; undergoing heart surgery; suffering from immunodeficiency disorders; and to correct a low platelet count.

“As we are currently in the middle of winter and school holiday’s we encourage everyone to help support the many patients who need blood during this crucial period,” says Marike Carli, Public Relations Manager at WCBS. During the winter

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Western Cape Blood Service NPC | Pr. No: 7800045 | Reg. No: 1943/016692/08

Directors: GRM Bellairs, NB du Toit, N Dhevcharran, A Huggett, CF Ingram, EC Johannes, VJ Louw, UD Mungal-Singh, DM Ndebele, M Moyo, PK Slack (Chairman), PJC Veldhuizen. Company Secretary: Themis Commercial Legal Advisors (Pty) Ltd

period, WCBS pays tribute to blood donors, or as they refer to them, local heroes, by giving each donor who successfully donates blood a pair of WCBS hero-inspired socks.

“Not all heroes wear capes; they donate blood and save lives. No matter who you are, you could become a hero. Register to become a blood donor today”, Carli added. If you are between 16 and 75, weigh 50kg or more, are in good general health, and lead a safe sexual lifestyle, you should be able to donate.

For more information or to find your closest blood donation clinic, visit www.wcbs.org.za, download the WCBS App, or send a WhatsApp to 060 549 7244.

Do something remarkable, donate blood.

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Distributed by the Western Cape Blood Service
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Notes to the editor:

Click on the link below to view 3 donor profiles and find out what motivated these local heroes to donate blood and why they continue to do so.

<https://www.wcbs.org.za/not-all-heroes-wear-capes-they-donate-blood-and-save-lives/>

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