

# FACT SHEET

## Blood Donation and Bone Marrow / Stem Cell Donation



### About us

The Leukaemia Foundation is the only national not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the care and cure of patients and families living with leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma and related blood disorders.

We invest millions of dollars in the work of Australia's leading researchers to develop better treatments and cures and provide free services to support patients and their families.

We receive no ongoing government funding. We rely on the generosity of the community and corporate sector to further our Vision to Cure and Mission to Care.

### We can help you

Our range of free services supports thousands of Australians, from diagnosis, through treatment and beyond. To learn more, please call 1800 620 420 to speak with one of our Support Services team.

### You can help us

There are many ways that you can help us to improve the quality of life for people with blood cancer. From making a donation, to signing up for an event; from volunteering, or joining us as a corporate sponsor - please call 1800 500 088 or go to [www.leukaemia.org.au](http://www.leukaemia.org.au) to learn more.

*Last updated: Feb 2011*

## To treat one person with acute leukaemia for one month, 18 people need to donate blood.

### Blood donation

Blood donations are vital for treating people with leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma and related blood disorders. In Australia, blood donations are collected by the Australian Red Cross Blood Service. Three types of donations can be given:

- Whole blood donation
- Plasma donation
- Platelet donation

Whole blood donation takes about an hour, including time for paperwork and refreshments; plasma and platelet donation takes a bit longer. Each whole blood donation is also separated into red cells, plasma and platelets, however direct donations provide concentrated quantities to help more people.

Of the 26,800 blood donations needed in Australia each week, 34% of donated red blood cells and 50-60% of donated platelets are used for cancer patients. On average, the blood products required for initial treatment of a person with acute leukaemia may be:

- 9 x units (250ml/unit) of red cells each month
- 9 x units (200ml/unit) of platelets each month

### Bone marrow / stem cell donation

Siblings are the ideal donors for people who are in need of a bone marrow or stem cell transplant as they are most likely to have a similar tissue type as the recipient. However only one person in three will find a matched donor within their family. The other two in three rely on the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry (ABMDR) or other international registries to find a suitable match.

The ABMDR is a list of people who have registered to donate stem cells to help treat a person with blood cancer. It is linked to a worldwide network of donor registries. By joining the registry, a potential donor may be selected to help any patient in need, anywhere in the world.

Because a person's tissue type is directly related to his or her ethnic origin, Australia needs donors who reflect many different communities. Without this it becomes difficult to find matched donors of non-European or mixed ethnic backgrounds.

Donors must be between 18 and 40 years of age at registration and in good health. To register, make an appointment to give blood and ask for an ABMDR consent form when you donate. If you match with a patient you will be asked to provide another blood sample at the Blood Service to confirm the match. Counselling will be conducted to assess if you are suitable and willing to proceed to a possible stem cell donation.

Only one in 1000 donors will be asked to donate in any year. Donors are retired from the registry on their 60th birthday.

### More information:

Australian Red Cross Blood Service — Freecall 13 14 95 or visit [www.donateblood.com.au](http://www.donateblood.com.au)

Australian Bone Marrow Donor Registry — Freecall 13 14 95 or visit [www.abmdr.org.au](http://www.abmdr.org.au)