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Global blood services unite in a call for more donors

Blood services around the world are calling for more people to donate regularly as a range of pressures – from extreme weather and seasonal illness to changing donation patterns – challenge blood supplies.

Blood services in Canada, England and Australia are today calling for more donors, with blood supplies across the three countries dropping by up to 30 per cent in recent months.

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*Gerry Gogarty, Director of
Blood and Plasma Supply
NHS*



Donors giving blood

Intensifying the strain is a growing demand for blood due to ageing populations leading to more people living with conditions like cancer and sickle cell that require regular blood transfusions for treatment. At the same time, demand for medicines made from plasma to treat immune deficiencies, bleeding disorders and other conditions continues to rise.

Australian Red Cross Lifeblood, NHS Blood and Transplant, and both Canadian Blood Services and Héma-Québec in Canada say these pressures point to a growing global blood supply challenge.

Gerry Gogarty, Director of Blood and Plasma Supply at

NHS Blood and Transplant, said with millions globally depending on blood transfusions for surgeries, trauma, cancer treatment and chronic disease, disruption to regular donation is a

challenge all three countries face.

"Blood collection systems are vulnerable to changing weather and climate, including heatwaves in summer and cold and flu outbreaks in winter, but regular donors are the foundation of a resilient supply," Gerry said.

"By boosting the number of donors, particularly those with key blood types including O negative, B negative and the RO subtype needed to treat sickle cell, we can better withstand these shocks and ensure we are prepared for a future where events like this may happen more often."

The pressure is being felt across all three countries. In the past month, Lifeblood launched an urgent appeal for 12,000 donors, Canadian Blood Services saw inventories fall by nearly 20 per cent, and NHS Blood and Transplant issued an urgent call for donors to fill 60,000 appointments over the summer period.

Cath Stone, Chief Customer Officer at Lifeblood, said the international appeal was about using a united voice to encourage more people to become blood donors and to help boost vital stocks.

"Millions of people across our countries are eligible to donate blood, but only a small proportion do," Cath said.

"Blood donation is one of the simplest ways people can make a real difference. We need more people to take that first step and become donors."

"The circumstances may be different in each of our countries, but the challenge is shared: too few eligible people donate blood regularly," said Ron Vezina, Vice-President, Donor Engagement and Corporate Reputation at Canadian Blood Services.

"In Canada, only about two per cent of eligible people currently donate. A strong and resilient blood system depends on more people coming forward, not just when the need is heightened, but as a regular part of their routine."

If you're feeling healthy and well, there's a good chance you're eligible to donate blood.

Visit blood.ca, hemaquebec.ca, lifeblood.com.au or blood.co.uk to book an appointment today.

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Héma-Québec Media Contact: <mailto:medias@hema-quebec.qc.ca>

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