# BLOOD DONATION: THE IMPORTANCE OF RECRUITING AND RETAINING DONORS FOR BLOOD TRANSFUSION SAFETY

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**Abstract:** Blood donation is a voluntary, altruistic, and essential act for maintaining health services, since blood components are used in situations such as surgeries, traumas, hemorrhages, severe anemia, cancer treatments, and other clinical conditions. This article aimed to analyze the importance of blood donation, the main factors related to the decision to donate, barriers to donation, and strategies for recruiting and retaining donors, with emphasis on the role of nursing. An integrative literature review was conducted, selecting studies published between 2018 and 2026, supplemented by official documents from the Ministry of Health and the National Health Surveillance Agency. Recent evidence points to altruism and the desire to help others as important motivators, while fear of needles, blood, or fainting, lack of time, doubts about eligibility, and inadequate information can hinder donation. It is concluded that ongoing health education, welcoming, clear communication, fear reduction, and donor relationship strategies are fundamental to increasing recruitment and encouraging

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repeat donations, thus contributing to blood transfusion safety.

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## INTRODUCTION

Blood donation is a voluntary act of great social and health-related importance. The collected blood can be processed into different blood components, allowing a single donation to contribute to meeting various clinical needs. An adequate supply of these components depends on the continued participation of the population and the maintenance of safe stocks.

Despite its importance, donation is still influenced by individual, social, and organizational factors. Recent studies show that altruism and the willingness to help others are among the main motivators, while fear of needles, blood, or fainting, lack of time, and doubts related to one's own health status are among the main barriers (MONTEIRO et al., 2024; FRANCE et al., 2022).

In Brazil, donor selection involves clinical assessment and safety criteria established by health regulations. Screening is performed before each donation to protect both the donor and the recipient (BRASIL, 2020).

## RESEARCH PROBLEM

What are the main factors that influence the population's decision to donate blood and return for further donations, and how can nursing contribute to recruiting, welcoming, and retaining these donors?

## RATIONALE

Discussion of blood donation is relevant because hemotherapy depends on voluntary, regular donors. Understanding the factors that encourage or hinder donation makes it possible

to develop more effective health education strategies, reduce concerns, and strengthen the bond between the hemotherapy service and the population. Nursing plays an important role in this process, from welcoming and providing guidance to observing the donor's condition and offering assistance during and after collection.

## OBJECTIVES

### GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To analyze the importance of blood donation and identify strategies for recruiting and retaining donors, highlighting the role of nursing in safety and health education.

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

* Describe the importance of blood donation for healthcare.
* Identify the main factors that motivate or hinder donation.
* Present general criteria related to donor eligibility.
* Discuss health education strategies to increase donor recruitment.
* Highlight the importance of welcoming donors and the role of nursing in the donor experience.
* Address donor retention as a strategy for maintaining adequate blood product stocks.

## METHODOLOGY

This is an integrative literature review, with a descriptive character and a qualitative approach. Scientific studies published between 2018 and 2026 were considered, prioritizing research related to blood donation, motivations, barriers, donor return, health education, donor experience, and professional practice in hemotherapy. Official documents from the Ministry of Health and the National Health Surveillance Agency were also used for information on

donation criteria and safety. Materials not directly related to the topic and publications outside the defined time frame were excluded, except for official documents used to contextualize current regulations.

## DEVELOPMENT

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BLOOD DONATION

Blood and its components play an indispensable role in the care of patients in different situations. Red blood cells may be needed in cases of anemia or blood loss; platelets are used in specific cases of bleeding or a significant decrease in platelet count; plasma and other components also have their own clinical indications. Therefore, maintaining stocks depends on regular, voluntary donations (BRASIL, 2026).

Voluntary donation represents a concrete form of solidarity. However, the availability of blood should not depend solely on emergency campaigns; it is necessary to foster a culture of regular donation. Sustaining this behavior is especially important because the need for transfusions arises daily and cannot be entirely predicted.

## CRITERIA FOR BLOOD DONATION

Candidate eligibility is determined through clinical screening performed before collection. In general, aspects such as age, weight, health conditions, nutrition, rest, medication use, and medical history are assessed. The Ministry of Health lists, among the general criteria, an age of 16 to 69 years, a minimum weight of 50 kg, being well-fed and having rested adequately, as well as other conditions that must be assessed individually (BRASIL, 2023).

## MOTIVATIONS FOR DONATING BLOOD

Motivations for donating vary, but altruism consistently appears in the literature as

one of the main factors. The desire to help people one does not know, contribute to saving lives, and demonstrate solidarity may encourage the decision to donate (MONTEIRO et al., 2024).

The influence of family members and friends can also encourage this behavior. Positive experiences, social recognition, and well-structured campaigns can help people not only donate for the first time, but also consider donation as a regular practice.

## BARRIERS RELATED TO DONATION

Among the most frequently described obstacles are fear of needles, blood, pain, dizziness, or fainting, as well as lack of time, doubts about one's own health, and limited knowledge about the process. In Brazil, a study involving primary care users identified fear related to blood, injections, and fainting as an important barrier to donation (ZUCOLOTO et al., 2019).

Lack of adequate information can also increase insecurity. Thus, explaining each step of the procedure, clarifying eligibility criteria, and providing guidance on safety measures can reduce negative perceptions. The literature emphasizes that consistent information and appropriate communication can reduce uncertainty and encourage donor retention (MONTEIRO et al., 2024).

## HEALTH EDUCATION AS A DONOR RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

Health education is an important tool for bringing the population closer to hemotherapy services. Campaigns can use health centers, schools, universities, businesses, social media, and other community settings to disseminate reliable information about the importance of donation, basic criteria, and how to access services.

Educational strategies should avoid approaches based solely on emergency appeals. It is important to present donation as an act of citizenship and solidarity, clarify questions, and dispel myths. For young people and new donors, accessible language and digital

communication can expand the reach of campaigns (FRANCE et al., 2022; MONTEIRO et al., 2024).

## DONOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Recruitment comprises actions intended to bring new candidates closer to hemotherapy services. Retention, in turn, seeks to encourage donors to return after a safe and positive experience. Maintaining regular donors is strategic because it reduces reliance on one-off campaigns and contributes to greater predictability of blood supplies.

To encourage donors to return, the service should provide a respectful welcome, clear information, an organized environment, appropriate support during collection, and post-procedure guidance. The donor's experience may influence their intention to return and also their willingness to recommend donation to others.

## DONOR CARE AND SAFETY

Care should begin as soon as the donor arrives at the service. The team must establish clear, respectful, and individualized communication, taking into account possible fears and previous experiences. Clinical screening is an essential step in assessing the candidate's eligibility and identifying situations that may pose a risk.

During collection, the team should monitor the donor's general condition and promptly recognize signs of discomfort or adverse reactions. After collection, guidance on hydration, nutrition, and immediate care contributes to an appropriate recovery. Donor and recipient safety must remain the central principle throughout the process (BRASIL, 2020).

## NURSING IN HEMOTHERAPY

Nursing participates in different stages of donor care, including welcoming, guidance, assessment, monitoring during collection, and post-procedure care, according to the

service's organization and protocols. Professional communication is essential for answering questions, reducing anxiety, and promoting a safe experience.

In addition to direct care, nurses can participate in educational activities, donor recruitment campaigns, team training, and the development of strategies to improve the donor experience. Educational work helps transform technical information into guidance that is understandable and accessible to the population.

## DISCUSSION

The studies analyzed indicate that the decision to donate blood does not depend on a single factor. Altruism emerges as a relevant motivator, while fear and practical limitations are among the main obstacles. This situation demonstrates that recruitment strategies should combine communication about the social importance of donation with concrete actions to reduce concerns and facilitate access to the service (MONTEIRO et al., 2024; FRANCE et al., 2022).

In the Brazilian context, fear of blood, injections, and fainting warrants specific attention, especially among people who have never donated. Guidance before the procedure can contribute to a more realistic perception of the experience and reduce negative expectations (ZUCOLOTO et al., 2019).

Another important aspect is the quality of the experience provided by the service. A donor who receives respectful care, appropriate information, and safety measures tends to develop a more positive perception. Thus, retention should not be understood solely as a strategy for maintaining supplies, but also as the result of a relationship of trust between citizens and the health service.

In this process, nursing holds a strategic position because nurses have direct contact with donors at different stages. Listening, health education, clinical observation, and individualized guidance can help reduce barriers and strengthen adherence to voluntary donation.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Blood donation is essential to the safe delivery of health care and depends on the voluntary participation of the population. Recent literature shows that altruism and the desire to help are important motivators, while fear, lack of time, questions, and insufficient knowledge may hinder participation.

Donor recruitment and retention require ongoing actions involving health education, accessible communication, humanized care, safety throughout the process, and strategies that promote positive experiences. Nursing plays a fundamental role in this context, both in direct care and in educational activities and efforts to promote donation.

Therefore, investing in reliable information, reducing barriers, and fostering relationships with donors can help increase public participation and strengthen the availability of blood components. Donation should be encouraged as an act of solidarity and citizenship, while always maintaining the technical and sanitary criteria required to protect donors and recipients.

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