

Hi, I'm Jo Anna Leppek, and I am a blood donor recruiter at the Northern California Community Blood Bank. We are the only blood bank between Santa Rosa, Redding, and Medford. We serve all of the hospitals in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. We are a non-profit organization NOT affiliated with any of those hospitals.

Did you know that 1 in 3 people will use blood in their lifetime? Or that there is NO substitute for human blood? This means we need to collect 40-50 units of whole blood daily to meet the needs of those we serve. Since only 37% of the population is eligible to donate, and only 5% of that eligible population actually does', YOU can make a real difference.

My job is tons of fun as I believe I get to work with and for some of the nicest most giving people in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. Over the years we have seen a slow but steady decrease in our average number of whole blood collections. There are many possible reasons for the decline but most notably- the blood banking industry experiences many of the same challenges as most business' in tough economic times. It is becoming more and more difficult for people to get away from their jobs and busy schedules to donate, even though it only takes one hour of time. Other areas that hit us hard is travel to malaria areas, recent illnesses and tatoos. Many times people think that medications or medical conditions such as high blood pressure or diabetes will cause them to be ineligible to donate. That is not always and most often not the case! Call and find out if you have any questions.

Over the years we've been hit hard by the increased popularity of tattoos and the required one year deferral period for those folks who got them.

Beginning July, 2013 our job just got a little easier! When a requirement for body art practitioners to be registered and for shops to be more strictly inspected came into effect, the Northern California Community Blood Bank was able to change the deferral guidelines for those people who have gotten inked. Safety of the blood supply is ALWAYS the #1 priority and so THIS IS GREAT NEWS! Whereas the deferral, or time that one would have to wait if they got ink use to be 1 year from the day you received it we now only defer for 30 days! The only other specification is that the area is free from any signs of infection. So if you got a tattoo in a regulated shop in California on September 1<sup>st</sup>, come see us on October 2<sup>nd</sup>! Come in to our center near St. Joseph Hospital or keep an eye out for our blood mobiles around town. For locations, check our website at [nccbb.org](http://nccbb.org)

We are in pursuit of a safe and adequate blood supply, which truly makes a difference in peoples lives. The hope you give to a patient or their family when you donate is perhaps the most precious gift of all. Your dedication today provides hope and healing for tomorrow.

The blood that saves lives, is the blood that is on the shelf when it is needed. If you own a shop, maybe you want to sponsor a blood drive!

Listen, if you have a tattoo, words we should never hear you say...."I'm afraid of needles"