

This is John Gullam from the Northern California Community Blood Bank with a Community Comment on KINS

Graduations, Gardening, Crabs Baseball, the river, Sun, Vacations. Summer is here in Humboldt County and that means different things to different people. At the Blood Bank we start thinking about ways to be sure we meet the needs of the patients we serve. BBQ for Family Night on Wednesday, Bloodmobiles at Saturday events and fun things happening at the Blood Bank are all ways to get people's attention but the bottom line is that we need members of the community or we can't do what we do. We need all of our blood donors to donate twice this summer - we need 1,000 people who have never donated before to walk onto a bloodmobile or into the blood bank. These are the things we need to do to maintain our Red Cell and Plasma needs but we also, as always are keenly aware of the changing needs in the medical community. In the first 4 months of this year we distributed virtually the same number of Red Cells as for the same period last year while, for the same period we have provided for patients 67.4% MORE platelets. The need for platelets is being driven by patient need and new therapies that only use platelets, as well as research into ways to conserve blood during surgeries.

The most efficient way to collect platelets is by apheresis, a process that involves a donor's blood being centrifuged at the bedside and separated into its basic components. Whole blood is made up of roughly 45% Red Blood Cells 55% Plasma and less than 1% Platelets. What this means is that when your whole blood donation is separated into its component parts we have a lot of what we need less of and very little of what we need more of.

Remember that centrifuge? During an apheresis donation our staff will specify which components are most needed by patients and collect those components, returning the others back to you. Typically we will collect your platelets and if you have type O- we will collect Red Cells – If you are type AB (the universal plasma donor) we will also collect plasma. When collected by whole blood 5 donations are needed to create a single dose of platelets – by apheresis we can collect two –even 3- doses in one donation

If you are interesting in learning more about platelet donation please call the blood bank at 443-8004 or ask a Donor Care Specialist during your next donation.

If you give us 6 hours a year we will leave you the other 8,763 to mow the lawn – or fix the fence – or clean out the shed.

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