

Canadian Blood Services in desperate need of donations

Written By ALYSSA PARKHILL

Canadian Blood Services are hosting clinic events throughout Caledon for residents to safely donate as the demand for blood continues to rise.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of donors has dropped significantly as residents are staying home to keep themselves, their families, and members of their community safe from the virus. Due to the drop-off in attendance at local clinic days, Canadian Blood Services is asking for the community to help them, as the demand for blood is higher than ever.

The arrival of COVID-19 in March recorded a significant drop in the number of donations across Canada as donors, both individuals and groups, cancelled appointments. In addition, some of our mobile donation events were suddenly cancelled entirely due to venue closures, said Elaine St. Pierre, Territory Manager at Canadian Blood Services. Municipal facilities like the Albion Bolton Community Centre and private venues like the Royal Ambassador Event Centre in Caledon East have been very generous in continuing to open for our blood donation events, despite being closed to the public.

Canadian Blood Services has, according to St. Pierre, put in responsible measures to keep donors at a safe distance from one another to follow physical distancing rules, which includes allowing only two people in the clinic at a time. As well, the organization has bolstered its wellness screening and increased cleaning of all equipment and surfaces. Donors are required to wear a mask, as are all staff members and volunteers. Single-use Ziploc bags are being used to hold the blood donation bags for further protection.

Safety is our highest priority and enhanced wellness measures are in effect throughout all of our donor clinics centres, said St. Pierre.

Canadian Blood Services have had to reduce the amount of appointments for blood donations daily to reduce the traffic of residents. With the demand for blood at a near all-time high, it presents something of a challenge for the organization as it tries to cope during this difficult time.

While the demand for blood is rising, we are challenged with the reduced capacity we now have to collect blood due to physical distancing and other safety measures in our donor centres. Simply put, we can process fewer donors at any given time, explained St. Pierre. We are adding more appointments at certain events and we need donors to fill every available appointment and play an essential role in meeting the rising needs of patients across Canada.

She added, Donors have shown incredible flexibility and commitment thus far through the pandemic, and we need that to continue as demand rises over the summer months and we adjust and respond to this next phase.

Canadian Blood Services is asking those who are in good health to reach out to their local blood donor clinic to book an appointment and donate. However, as important as donating blood is, the organization understands there are many who still feel unsafe or uncomfortable with reaching and booking an appointment. With that in mind, Canadian Blood Services is offering other ways for people to help.

Whether you become a regular blood, plasma or platelet donor, register to become a stem cell donor, register your intent to donate organs and tissues, volunteer or raise awareness of the need for blood on social media, you are making an impact on the lives of the patients we serve, said St. Pierre. We can all be part of something big before, during and as we recover from the pandemic, your donation matters!

Appointments can be booked online at blood.ca, or by calling 1-888-236-6283.