

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Key to “giving” at Lakehills blood drive

Contributed

Holidays are supposed to make us think of words like merry, thankful, and happy. One way to keep those words at the forefront is to donate blood to assist in saving lives for those with cancer, transplant candidates, trauma victims, newborns and Moms, COVID-19 patients and more. Eligibility for donors has changed and expanded given new FDA guidelines and technology breakthroughs.

With parental consent, a 16-year old who weighs at least 120 pounds can donate. A 17-year old meeting the minimum weight of 110 pounds can donate. There is no upper age limit: all categories of donors should be in good health and have a valid photo ID. Some medications may preclude donating and that list is available on line or by calling the South Texas Blood and Tissue Center shown below.

Military personnel who were previously excluded due to living in Europe are now eligible to give. If they were stationed over six months in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands (1980-1990) or in Greece, Turkey, Spain, Portugal or Italy (1980-1996), they can donate blood. And the process is easier than ever.

“We have had several potential donors in a variety of ages screened and discovered a low iron level and therefore could not donate that day,” Bandera American Legion Post 157 Commander and blood drive volunteer Susan Junker said. “Everyone was disappointed and some surprised, but instructions were provided to prepare for a future drive.” The next Bandera County blood drive will be held Dec. 5, at the

Lakehills Civic Center, 11125 PR 37. Appointments are available from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. by calling 210-731-5590, or visit SouthTexasBlood.org. Appointments allow for more efficient donating and ensure it is as convenient as possible for the donors. Iron rich meals should be eaten the night before and the morning of donation in addition to drinking plenty of water and getting a good night's sleep. Donors should arrive at their scheduled time with a photo ID wearing comfortable clothing and bring a book or electronic device. All donors will then go through a check of health history (also available online) and vital signs to include pulse, temperature, blood pressure and iron levels.

Donors are guided to full length cots and blood collection begins. This may be the shortest part of giving blood: just 10-20 minutes, then off to the snack and beverage table and a chair for observation for a few minutes. Whole blood is the most common product collected and this pint can save up to three lives. The process can be repeated every 56 days. Testing for the COVID-19 antibody is done for every donor and the results sent to them within two weeks.

For additional information, contact Junker at junkersl@me.com.