

Wellness

FIRST MUTUAL
HEALTH

JUNE 2021



Importance of Blood Donation

- Winter workouts.
- International Albinism Awareness.
- COVID-19 vaccination is a safer way to help build protection.

Dear member,

Welcome to the First Mutual Health June Newsletter. The year has progressed well though we continue to operate in an environment where COVID-19 is still a threat. We thank you for the response to the COVID-19 vaccination programme offered by First Mutual Health in partnership with Municipal health departments as we play our part toward a safer way to help build protection against the coronavirus.

This month we share a topic on blood donation and its importance, as well as tips on the benefits of winter exercise and unpack the subject of albinism.

14 June is observed worldwide, as World Blood Donor Day to raise awareness among people regarding the requirement for safe blood as well as blood products like whole blood. A campaign driven by the World Health Organisation (WHO), this day is also marked by the heart-warming gesture of thanking each donor.

Why it is done?

There may be different reasons behind the blood requirement of an ill person. They may have met with an accident, undergone surgery or is suffering from an illness such as anaemia. Blood donations play a vital part in the recovery of affected persons. Blood donation is a helpful and responsible gesture not only to the person in need, but also towards society.

Advantageous for the Body

Blood donation is not at all harmful for the body; rather the four or five litres of blood that can be donated every three or four months by both men and women ensure that you remain fit and fine. Firstly, the cell depletion that occurs due to blood donation, forces the body to produce new cells within 48 hours, thereby freshening up the entire body system. Secondly, the body is armed against a host of diseases ranging from liver and heart problems to even cancer. Thirdly, within just one or two months, a donor regains his lost blood.

Blood Donation is the Sole Way of Obtaining Blood

Blood can neither be artificially produced nor can it be stored beyond a definite time. Amidst the three components of blood, plasma can be preserved for years, red blood cells can be stored for 42 days and platelets can be kept only for 5 days. Consequently, the requirement for blood is always high in hospitals and the only way to meet this requirement is through donation.

Blood donation is Safe.

New sterile disposable equipment is used for each donor, so there is no risk of contracting a blood borne infection by donating blood. If you are a healthy adult, you can usually donate a pint (about half a litre) of blood without endangering your health. .

How you prepare, eligibility requirements:

To be eligible to donate blood you must be:

- In good health.
- At least 50 kilograms in weight.
- Able to pass the physical and health history assessments.

Before your blood donation:

- Get plenty of sleep the night before you plan to donate.
- Eat a healthy meal before your donation. Avoid fatty foods, such as a hamburger, fried chips or ice cream.
- Drink plenty of water before the donation.
- Wear a shirt with sleeves that can be rolled up or a short-sleeved shirt.

What you can expect before the procedure?

Before you can donate blood, you will be required to complete a confidential medical history that includes questions about behaviours known to carry a higher risk of blood borne infections. These are infections that are transmitted through the blood.

Due to the risk of blood borne infections, not everyone can donate blood. The following are a few high-risk groups that are not eligible to donate blood:

Anyone who has used injected drugs, steroids or another substance not

Blood Donation

prescribed by a doctor within a three month period prior to the donation

Anyone who has had a positive test for HIV.

Anyone who has had close contact with, lived with, or had sexual contact with a person who has viral hepatitis within a 12 months period prior to the blood donation.

A brief physical examination, which includes checking your blood pressure, pulse and temperature, will be carried out before the donation. A small sample of blood is taken from a finger prick and is used to check the oxygen-carrying component of your blood (haemoglobin level). If your haemoglobin concentration is normal and you have met all the other screening requirements, you can proceed with donating blood.

During the procedure

You lie or sit in a reclining chair with your arm extended on an armrest. A blood pressure cuff or tourniquet is placed around your upper arm to fill your veins with more blood. This makes the veins easier to see and easier to insert the needle into, and also helps fill the blood bag more quickly.

The skin on the inside of your elbow is cleaned and a new, sterile needle is inserted into a vein in your arm. This needle is attached to a thin, plastic tube and a blood bag. Once the needle is in place, you tighten your fist several times to help the blood flow from the vein. Blood initially is collected into tubes for testing. When these have been collected, blood is allowed to fill the bag, about a pint. The needle is usually in situ for approximately 10 minutes. When the procedure is complete, the needle is removed, a small bandage is placed on the needle site and a dressing is wrapped around your arm.

Another method of donating blood becoming increasingly common is apheresis. During apheresis, the donor is connected to a machine that can collect and separate blood components, such as red cells, plasma and platelets. This process allows for specific components to be collected and takes longer than standard blood donation, typically up to two hours.

After the procedure

After donating blood, you sit in an observation area, where you rest and eat a light snack and you can leave after 15 minutes. Post donating blood, it is encouraged to:

- Drink extra fluids.
- Avoid strenuous physical activity or heavy lifting for about five hours.
- If you feel lightheaded, lie down with your feet up until the feeling passes.
- Keep your bandage on and dry for the next five hours.
- If you have bleeding after removing the bandage, put pressure on the site and raise your arm until the bleeding stops.
- If bruising occurs, apply a cold pack to the area periodically during the first 24 hours.
- Consider adding iron-rich foods to your diet to replace the iron lost with blood donation.

DONOR SAFETY QUESTIONS

Is there a risk of getting coronavirus from donating blood?

COVID-19 does not pose any special risk to blood donors during the donation process or from attending blood drives.

Please keep in mind that, since blood donors must be healthy and without fever on the day of donation, the risk of exposure to a sick person is extremely low at a blood drive.

I feel healthy, but I'm worried that I have coronavirus but am asymptomatic. Is it still okay to donate?

The first thing to note is that respiratory viruses are not known to be transmitted by blood transfusion, and there is no evidence to-date that SARS-CoV-2 can be transfusion-transmitted.

That said, routine blood donor evaluation will help prevent individuals with respiratory infections from donating. Blood donors must be healthy and have no symptoms of illness or fever on the day of donation

In addition, we are taking extra precautions for COVID-19 and have in place deferrals for close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case.

Source: Mayo Clinic

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**BLOOD
DONATION DAY**

On this day we recognise the need to raise global awareness of the need for safe blood and blood products.

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Winter Workouts

Even the most dedicated exercise enthusiast can have a hard time exercising in winter.

Cold days and long nights make it hard to get out of bed, especially to exercise. However, there are simple ways to get motivated when the weather outside is chilly. The winter cold can seem like a great excuse to hibernate on your couch and push your fitness routine to the sidelines. However, winter is actually an important season to keep up with your active lifestyle. The winter months can make it easier to gain a few kilograms, and can set you back for the rest of the year.

Studies also have shown that exercising in cold weather can transform white fat, specifically belly and thigh fat, into calorie-burning brown fat. Outdoor winter workouts help you get exposure to sunlight, which may help ward off seasonal affective disorder, a type of depression that some people experience during the winter months. While cold-weather exercise is safe for most people, if you have certain conditions, such as asthma or heart problems, check with your doctor to review any special precautions you need to take based on your condition or medications.

Warming up to the cold

Cold muscles are at a greater risk for strains and injuries, so be sure to warm up before your cold-weather workout. Avoid starting with static stretches, i.e. not moving the body part while stretching, which can further increase your risk for injury. More dynamic forms of stretching that keep body parts moving can loosen your joints, get your blood flowing, and warm up muscles and tissues. Below are pre-exercise routines to consider:

Arm circles: Hold your arms out to the sides, palms down, at shoulder height. Begin making small circles and gradually make them larger until you complete 20 circles. Then go from large to

small circles until you complete another 20.

Arm swings: Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and swing your arms in unison to the right and then to the left, twisting from the waist. Go back and forth until you complete 10 swings total (five toward each side).

High steps: Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Raise your right knee high toward your chest (touch a wall for balance or place one or both hands around your knee, if needed). Hold for a second, then return to the starting position. Repeat the movement with your left knee. Go back and forth until you've lifted each knee five to 10 times.

Lunges: Stand with your feet together and step forward with your right leg, lowering your body by bending both knees to 90° angles. Return to the starting position and repeat the movement with your left leg forward. Repeat the sequence five to 10 times.

Get outside

You have to respect colder weather and make sure you're properly prepared, just as you would with summer heat and humidity. Here are some tips to stay safe and healthy while you enjoy your cold-weather workouts.

Wear layers. Dress in clothing that you can easily take off and put back on as needed. Start with a thin layer of synthetic material, such as polypropylene, which draws sweat away from your body.

Next, add a layer of fleece or wool for insulation. (Always avoid cotton, which absorbs sweat and can make you colder.) Top this with a waterproof, breathable outer layer. You may need to experiment to find the right combination of clothing based on your exercise intensity and comfort level.

Protect your head, hands, and feet. When it's cold, blood flow concentrates in your body's core to help keep you warm, which leaves your head, hands, and feet vulnerable to the cold. Wear gloves lined with wool or fleece and protect your eyes from wind and glare with dark glasses.

Apply sunscreen. It may not feel hot, but you can still get sunburned in winter... Always wear a product that blocks both types of ultraviolet rays — UVA and UVB — with at least 30 SPF, and a lip balm with sunscreen.

Stay hydrated. You are more likely to get dehydrated in cold weather because cold air does get you thirsty! While you may not need the same fluid intake as during summer, you still need to maintain the same approach to hydration. Drink water before, during, and after your workout and pay attention to being thirsty.

Stay motivated. Remind yourself of why it's so important to stay active throughout the year — even when it feels hard to do so. If you prefer outdoor exercise, think of indoor exercise as a great way to switch up your routine and work your body in a different way than you usually do.

Exercise is too good for your body to pass up. Think of the winter as a time to get more creative with your exercise routine. Staying on track throughout the winter months will lead you to feeling even better than you usually do in the summer season! Remember — Summer bodies are forged in winter!

Source: everydayhealth.com

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On 13 June 2021, the world celebrates the International Albinism Awareness Day. This year's celebration is held under the theme "Strength Beyond All Odds".

Albinism is a rare group of genetics that cause the hair, skin and eyes to have little or no pigmentation. A defect in one of several genes that produce or distribute melanin causes albinism. The amount and type of melanin the body produces determines the colour of the skin, hair and eyes. Melanin, the chemical that is responsible for eye, skin and hair colour, plays an important role in the development of optic nerves, so people with albinism have vision problems. The defect gene is passed from both parents to a child, thus, albinism is hereditary and can be passed on to generations. Depending on the mutation, melanin production can either be slowed or completely stopped. In sub-Saharan Africa, albinism affects 1 in every 5,000 to 15,000 people of both sexes.

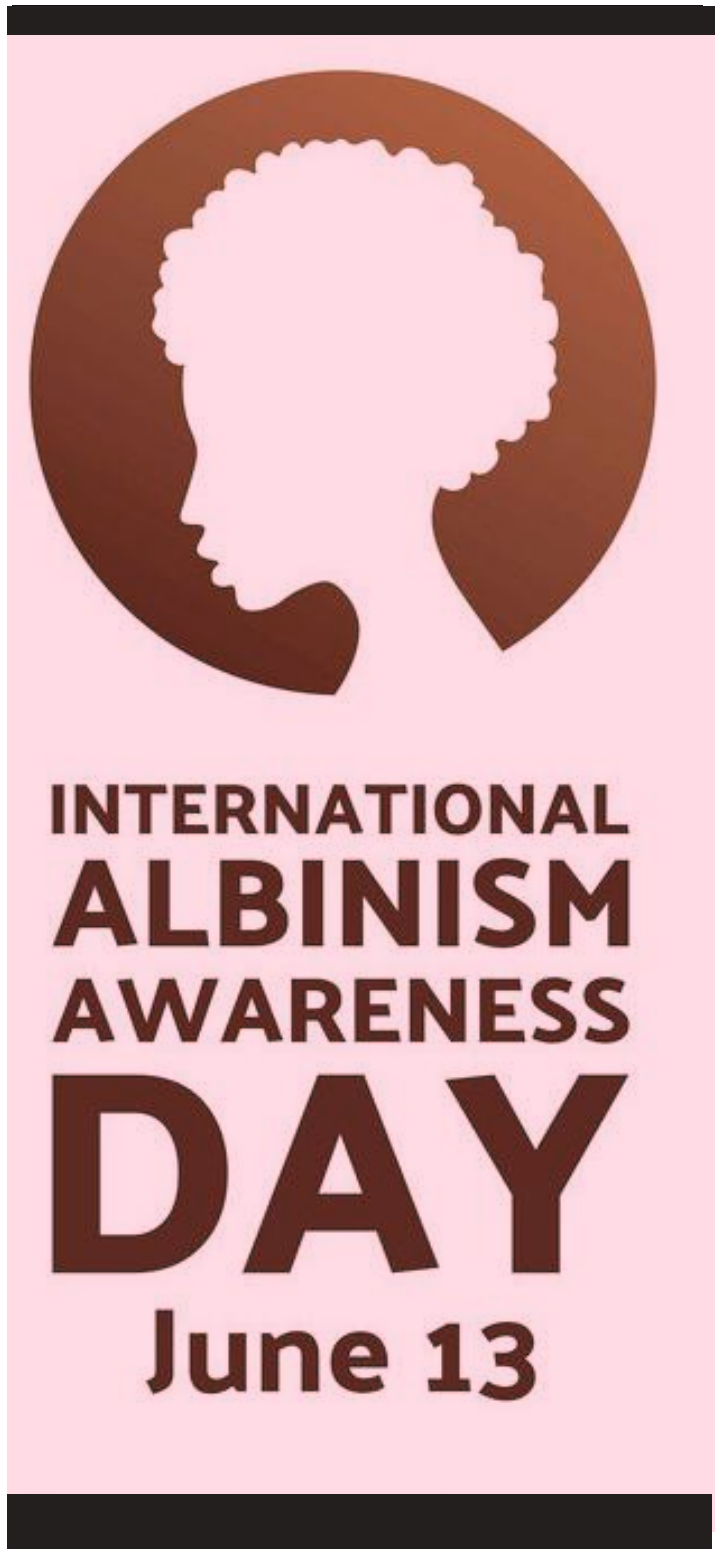
Symptoms of albinism

People with albinism have absence of melanin in their hair, eyes and skin. Their skin, hair and eyes have a lighter than normal colouring. When exposed to the sun, some people with albinism may develop freckles, lentiginos (large freckle-like spots), moles, sunburn and the inability to get a tan. People with albinism might have yellowish, reddish or brown hair. However, the hair may darken by early adulthood or due to the effects of minerals in water and the environment. Eye problems may include:

- Sensitivity to light
- Inability for the eyes to move in unison
- Extreme short sightedness
- Rapid eye movements
- Legal or complete blindness.
- Abnormal development of the retina, resulting in reduced vision

There is no known cure for albinism. However, there are means of relieving symptoms and prevention of skin and eye damage from the sun. People with albinism have to wear protective clothing, sunscreen and sunglasses to protect the skin and eyes from the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays. For those who experience eye problems, prescription eyeglasses can be worn to correct any vision problems. Vision problems can have an impact on learning, employment and general lifestyle.

People with albinism need to limit their outdoor activities because their skin and eyes are sensitive to the sun's (UV) rays. The sun's (UV) rays can be harmful and cause skin cancer and, in some instances, vision loss in some people with albinism. Melanin normally protects skin from the sun's ultraviolet rays, thus people with albinism are more sensitive to the exposure of the sun. If one is to be exposed to the sun, it is important for people with albinism to use sunscreen with a high SPF factor.



Albinism Complications

People with albinism usually have increased risk of sunburn, skin cancer and vision impairment. People with albinism often experience alienation, prejudice, stigma and abuse. This can lead to stress, isolation and low self-esteem. Families and schools are encouraged to include children with albinism in-group activities and provide necessary support and care. Locally, the Zimbabwe Albino Association was formed to remove any tradition-based stigma. The organisation seeks to raise adequate resources for people with albinism to get access to facilities that enables them to live a comfortable life as well as raise awareness and advance the rights of people with albinism. Such organisations help people with albinism to overcome and eliminate any stigma and vulnerability associated with albinism.

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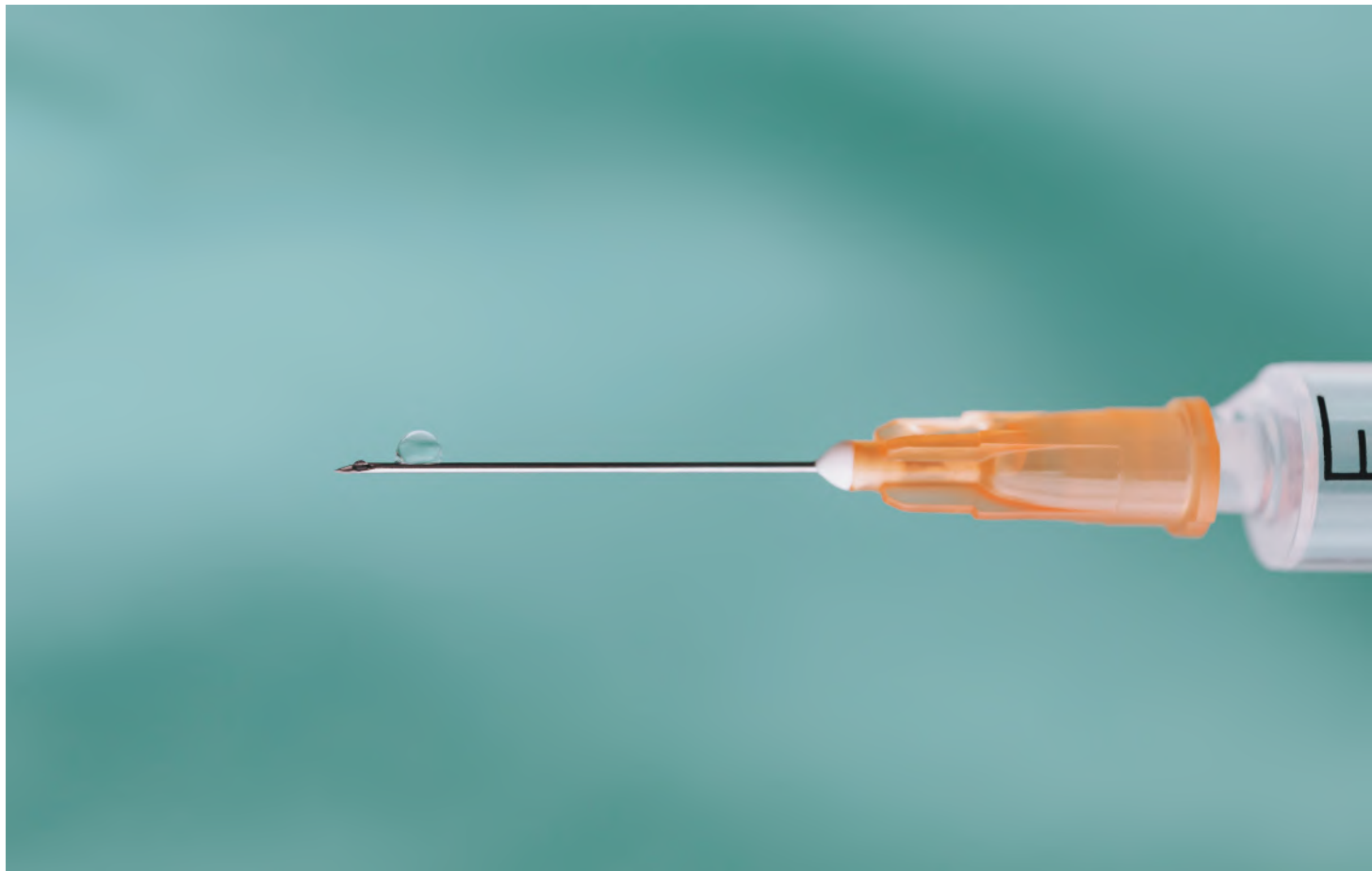
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WORLD ALBINISM DAY

A different skin tone does not change the person. Get to know someone for their personality not their skin tone.

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COVID-19 VACCINATION IS SAFE

COVID-19 vaccination is a safer way to help build protection

- COVID-19 can have serious, life-threatening complications, and there is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you. And if you get sick, you could spread the disease to friends, family, and others around you.
- Clinical trials for all vaccines show they are safe and effective before any vaccine can be authorised or approved for use, including COVID-19 vaccines.
- Getting COVID-19 may offer some protection, known as natural immunity. Current evidence suggests that reinfection with the virus that causes COVID-19 is uncommon in the months after initial infection, but may increase with time. The risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 far outweighs any benefits of natural immunity. COVID-19 vaccination will help protect you by creating an antibody (immune system) response without having to experience sickness.
- Both natural immunity and immunity produced by vaccine are important parts of COVID-19 disease that experts are trying to learn more about, and health authorities will keep the public informed as new evidence becomes available.

COVID-19 vaccination will be an important tool to help stop the pandemic

- Wearing masks and staying 6 feet apart from others help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others, but these measures are not enough. Vaccines will work with your immune system so it will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed.
- A growing body of evidence suggests that fully vaccinated people are less likely to be infected without showing symptoms (called an asymptomatic infection) and potentially less

likely to spread the virus that causes COVID-19 to others. However, further investigation is ongoing.

- Stopping a pandemic requires using all the tools we have available. As experts learn more about how COVID-19 vaccination may help reduce spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, Centres for Disease Control (CDC) will continue to update its recommendations to protect communities using the latest science.

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective

While more COVID-19 vaccines are being developed as quickly as possible, routine processes and procedures remain in place to ensure the safety of any vaccine that is authorised or approved for use. Safety is a top priority, and there are many reasons to get vaccinated. None of the COVID-19 vaccines can make you sick with COVID-19. None of the COVID-19 vaccines contain the live virus that causes COVID-19 so a COVID-19 vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19.

Source: Centres for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)

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To help minimise possible exposure to COVID-19 we encourage you to make use of our digital channels for queries and payments as listed below:

Ecocash Biller Code 32807

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Our contact centre will be available 7 days a week from 8am to 7pm. The contact center numbers are: 08677007432 and 0242 251 440

Claims Quotations

Claims quotations for authorisation may be emailed to: claims1@firstmutualhealth.co.zw
Every effort will be made to respond to the emails within an hour.

Contribution Payments

The proof of payment should be emailed to debtors@firstmutualhealth.co.zw

General Enquiries

Enquiries may also be sent to info@firstmutualhealth.co.zw



We can **STOP** the Corona Virus