January is National Blood Donor Month

The American Red Cross needs you to make a resolution to give blood regularly in 2018, beginning with National Blood Donor Month in January.

National Blood Donor Month recognizes the importance of giving blood and platelets while honoring those who roll up a sleeve to help patients in need.

It has been observed during January since 1970, and that's no coincidence. Winter is an especially difficult time to collect enough blood to meet patient needs. Unpredictable winter weather can result in blood drive cancellations...and seasonal illnesses, like the flu, may cause some donors to be unable to make or keep blood donation appointments.

Individuals of all blood types are needed, especially those with O negative, A negative and B negative. With a shelf life of 42 days, red blood cells must be constantly replenished to maintain an adequate supply for patients.

At a Red Cross Donation Center:

- Donating blood is a safe process. A sterile needle is used only once for each donor and then discarded.

- Blood donation is a simple four-step process: registration, medical history and mini-physical, donation and refreshments.

- Every blood donor is given a mini-physical, checking the donor's temperature, blood pressure, pulse and hemoglobin to ensure it is safe for the donor to give blood.

- The actual blood donation typically takes less than 10-12 minutes. The entire process, from the time you arrive to the time you leave, takes about an hour and 15 min.

- The average adult has about 10 pints of blood in his body. Roughly 1 pint is given during a donation.

- A healthy donor may donate red blood cells every 56 days, or double red cells every 112 days.

- A healthy donor may donate platelets as few as 7 days apart, but a maximum of 24 times a year.

- All donated blood is tested for HIV, hepatitis B and C, syphilis and other infectious diseases before it can be released to hospitals.

Remember...

- Blood transfusions save lives.

- There's no substitute for human blood.

- Every three seconds, someone needs a blood transfusion.

- About 1 in 7 people entering a hospital need blood.

- More than 41,000 blood donations are needed every day.

- A car accident victim can require as many as 100 pints of blood.

- A pint of blood, separated into components, can help up to three people.

- It's safe, simple and it saves lives.

- Visit *www.redcrossblood.org* for additional information regarding donating blood, including whether or not you are eligible, and locations of blood drives and donor centers near you.

You're somebody's type! Give Blood!

Cervical Health Awareness Month

January is Cervical Health Awareness Month. It's important to be aware of what you can do to prevent cervical cancer.

Having your well-woman visit with a gynecologist each year and having a pap test can catch pre-cancerous changes and prevent them from developing into cancer.

HPV (human papillomavirus) is a major cause of cervical cancer. It is a very common infection that spreads through sexual activity.

About 79 million Americans currently have HPV, but many people with HPV don't know they are infected.

- The HPV vaccine (shot) can prevent HPV.
- Parents are encouraged to talk to their pediatrician about pre-teens getting the HPV vaccine at age 11 or 12 – both boys and girls.
- Teens and young adults should talk to their doctors if they didn't get the vaccine as pre-teens. Women up to age 26 and men up to age 21 can still get the vaccine.
- Cervical cancer can often be prevented with regular screening tests (called Pap tests) and follow-up care.
- Women are encouraged to start getting regular Pap tests at age 21.

Other risk factors for developing cervical cancer include:

- Smoking
- Immunosuppression (from disease or drugs)
- Chlamydia infection
- A diet low in fruits and vegetables
- Being overweight
- Long term use of oral contraceptives (longer than 5 years)

Early detection saves lives!