



Critical need for blood prompts Red Cross plea

July 16, 2002

BY HEATHER KORBINI

HAMPTON - There is someone in need of blood every two seconds, and according to the American Red Cross, current levels of available blood are so low lives could be in jeopardy.

The American Red Cross, along with the Hampton Rotary and the Ancient Order of Hibernians will be holding a blood drive July 18 from — to 6 p.m. at the United Methodist Church on Lafayette Road, and are urging people to come help out with donations.

The Red Cross is in a critical time-frame for blood collection, as some blood types are below the safe levels of supply.

According to Red Cross spokeswoman Dayna Bergin, summer months typically see a dip in the number of donors, but this year it happened sooner than expected.

"That is why it is critical for people to come donate," said Bergin. "We need it more in the summer because less people come out to donate.

"In order for us to fulfill all of our needs we have to have a three- to five-day supply. Right now we are probably at a one- to two-day supply," said Bergin.

She said the dip usually occurs in the summer because most people are busier at that time of year - either away on vacation or bringing the kids to camp.

Some people, said Bergin, just don't want to come out and donate.

"People's biggest fear is the needle," said Bergin. "But it sometimes helps to know there are trained people there. Everyone on staff is trained and charge nurses there to answer questions."

The length of time spent donating can vary, however a donation generally lasts 45 minutes to an hour, said Bergin. The needle is in the arm for five to 10 minutes.

"When we say 45 minutes to an hour people think the needle is in there the whole time. It really is only a few minutes," said Bergin.

"We are at a high need right now. We want to let people know we will make them as comfortable as possible, but we can't do that unless they come out," said Bergin.

Interested donors need to weigh more than 110 pounds, be at least 17 years of age and be in good health.

"The biggest thing is to make sure you drink a lot of water before you come in," said Bergin. "Especially in hot weather. You want to be hydrated."

The blood donated along the Seacoast helps supply 170 area hospitals, and while Bergin noted the current shortage is nationwide, she said "The Seacoast has been phenomenal as far as donors coming out. People there have done a really great job of coming out and helping."

Blood drives will be held in Exeter on July 24 at St. Michael's Church from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and in North Hampton on Aug. 10 at Seacoast Harley-Davidson from 10 a.m. to — p.m.