

Canadian Blood Services Announces New Partnership with the Canadian Hemochromatosis Society

(Ottawa, May 25, 2001) – In honour of Hemochromatosis Awareness Week (May 25-31) Canadian Blood Services (CBS) today announced that it has partnered with the Canadian Hemochromatosis Society to encourage eligible people with hemochromatosis to donate blood.

Hemochromatosis is a genetic disorder that results in an overload of iron in the body. If the condition goes undiagnosed, the iron build-up can damage vital organs. People with hemochromatosis use phlebotomies (bloodletting) to reduce the iron levels in their bodies. In order to replace the blood taken by phlebotomy, the body begins to create new red cells and this process draws out the excess iron stored in the organs.

At present, most of the blood given by people with hemochromatosis is discarded. CBS is encouraging healthy, eligible people with hemochromatosis to consider donating their blood at CBS clinics every 56 days.

"By donating their blood at Canadian Blood Services, a person with hemochromatosis will be helping to save the lives of up to four people," said Dr. Graham Sher, Vice-President Medical, Scientific and Clinical Affairs at Canadian Blood Services.

Hemochromatosis cannot be transmitted by blood, so the disorder does not prevent patients from donating. They do, however, have to meet all the regular CBS donor eligibility criteria to ensure that the donation will be safe for themselves and for the recipients.

"We are very pleased that people with hemochromatosis will be able to know that their blood donations are serving a useful purpose," said Charm Cottingham, National President of the Canadian Hemochromatosis Society.

Canadian Blood Services is a national, not-for-profit charitable organization whose sole mission is to manage the blood supply in all provinces and territories outside of Quebec. Canadian Blood Services operates 42 permanent collection sites and more than 10,000 blood donor clinics annually. For more information about CBS, please visit our web site at www.bloodservices.ca or call us toll free at 1-888 2 DONATE.

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