

Preparing for a Successful Donation Experience

Several things can be done before donating and between donations to keep you feeling your best. In fact, the following advice applies whether or not you are donating. These tips will make you feel better, healthier and better prepared to make a donation.

Rest: Getting enough rest plays a vital role in good health and your sense of well-being.

- Get a good night's rest before your donation.
- Try to schedule your donation either before or several hours after planned exercise.

Hydration: Drinking plenty of fluids helps your donation experience in three ways: 1) replaces the fluid volume lost during donation, 2) makes your veins easier to locate, and 3) helps you feel better following your donation.

- Start drinking extra water and fluids the day before you donate.
- Choose water, fruit juices, milk or sports drinks.
- Avoid drinking alcohol or caffeine (coffee, sodas, energy drinks) within 24 hours of your donation.
- Drink extra fluids for 24 hours following your donation.

Food and Nutrition: Eating a well-balanced meal within four hours of donating will keep you feeling well.

- Avoid fatty foods such as hamburgers, ice cream or pastries both the day before and the day of your donation. High-fat foods may affect the blood you donate.
- Eat a well-balanced diet of protein, carbohydrates and healthy fats.
- Don't skip meals, especially on the day of donation.
- Increase your diet in iron-rich foods to maintain your iron levels between donations.

