

# Giving blood is quick, easy

According to Katie McGuire, marketing and communications manager for the Greater Chesapeake and Potomac blood services region of the American Red Cross, giving blood is quick and simple.

The 1995 graduate of The John Carroll School, Bel Air, said the actual process of giving blood lasts about 10 minutes, while the entire process takes just one hour. Before giving blood, donors should drink extra water and non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic beverages and eat plenty of iron-rich foods.

## **The process**

A donor will first be greeted by a volunteer while signing in. The individual will then be given a booklet to read over which contains all of the information on what to expect during and after the donation as well as reasons one may not be permitted to give blood that day.

Once a donor decides to continue with the process, the individual will be taken into a private booth and interviewed by a phlebotomist, who will ask some questions of a personal nature in order to determine if the donor will be able to give blood that day and to protect the safety of the blood supply, said Ms. McGuire.

In addition to inquiring about a donor's health history, a professional will also take a donor's blood pressure, prick their finger to check the iron level and take the donor's temperature.

Once it is determined that an individual can donate blood, the person will be seated in a donor chair and the individual's arm will be cleaned with a sterilizing agent. After the 10-minute donation process is complete, the donor will hold a bandage over his or her arm and rest in the canteen area to enjoy cookies and juice while relaxing for five to 10 minutes.

"You need to replenish the fluids you've lost and give your body time to adjust," said Ms. McGuire.

She said blood types O and B have a high prevalence in the Baltimore area, and

because blood is perishable and expires after just 42 days, it's important for individuals to continue donating. According to the Red Cross, most people are eligible to donate, but only 5 percent of the population actually does.

Donor centers are located across the region, and potential donors can visit [www.my-redcross.org](http://www.my-redcross.org) or call 1-800-Give-Life.