

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Cookies, juice and free iron supplements are now part of blood donations**

Helping donors maintain healthy iron stores

**SEATTLE, WA**– Bloodworks Northwest is urging blood donors – especially young donors – to pump some iron – no trip to the gym required.

“Your body—and everybody—needs iron,” said Yanyun Wu, MD, PhD, chief medical officer of Bloodworks. “Just like donors take care of local patients by giving blood, we want to take care of our donors by ensuring that their iron stores are always healthy.”

Iron is an essential mineral that helps turn food into energy, and helps carry oxygen to organs, muscles and tissues in the body. Recent studies indicate that maintaining adequate iron “stores” – so that your body can quickly replace your red blood cells after a donation -- can be a special challenge for some younger donors.

“Keeping iron stores at a healthy level is especially important for younger women, whose bodies naturally require more iron” Wu said. “Unlike adults, young donors have not yet stored extra iron over the years to fall back on.”

In the days and weeks after someone donates, the body naturally absorbs iron to replace what is lost. The best way to boost your iron level is to eat a healthy diet, with plenty of iron-rich foods – like beans, nuts, seeds, dark leafy greens, root vegetables, dried fruits, enriched and whole grain breads, lean red meats, shellfish, whole grains, and eggs. Vegetarians have to work harder to get enough iron, but still have many good food choices. Some beverages with caffeine (coffee, tea, colas) can decrease iron absorption, so focusing on healthy eating is important.

In addition to a healthy diet, iron supplements can also help replace iron in your body. They are safe and can be taken daily to keep iron stores in balance.

“Bloodworks offers donors iron supplements free-of-charge at all of our centers for pick up.” Wu noted. “We will also mail iron supplements to your home.” For donors under 18 years old, a parent or guardian must sign an iron supplement request form. As with any supplement, donors should read the label careful. Iron supplements are also widely available over-the-counter at drug stores and iron is included in many multi-vitamins. More information is available at [bloodworksnw/about/iron](http://bloodworksnw/about/iron)

“We depend every day on the generosity and commitment of donors to help us meet the needs of local patients who depend on lifesaving transfusions, and in return we strive to do all we can to support them.” Wu said.

### **About BloodworksNW**

Bloodworks (formerly Puget Sound Blood Center) is backed by 70 years of Northwest history and 250,000 donors. It is local, nonprofit, independent, volunteer-supported and community-based. A recognized leader in transfusion medicine, Bloodworks serves patients in more than 90 hospitals in Washington, Oregon and Alaska — partnering closely with local hospitals to deliver the highest level of patient care. Comprehensive services include blood components, complex cross-matching, specialized lab services for organ transplants, care for patients with blood disorders, and collection of cord blood stem cells for cancer treatment. Bloodworks Research Institute performs leading-edge research in blood biology, transfusion medicine, blood storage and treatment of blood disorders. Patients with traumatic injuries, undergoing surgeries or organ transplantation, or receiving treatment for cancer and blood disorders all depend on our services, expertise, laboratories and research. For more information, visit [bloodworksnw.org](http://bloodworksnw.org)