

# Blood

By Sharon Fabian

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<sup>1</sup> Blood! It's the yucky stuff that oozes out of a little cut. It's the scary stuff that spurts out of a big cut. We've all learned not to touch blood, because it can be dangerous. Some people even pass out when they see blood. Is blood really something awful?



<sup>2</sup> In the Middle Ages, people seemed to think so. Back then, a common cure for diseases was to let some of the person's blood drain out. You might be surprised to learn that doctors didn't perform those operations; barbers did! Of course, this was dangerous and didn't do much to help people get well, either. Sometimes it killed people.

<sup>3</sup> Today we know that, while blood is something that we need to be careful about, it is not awful at all. Blood is part of our circulatory system. It carries oxygen and nutrients to all parts of our bodies. Blood keeps us alive and healthy. Today, instead of draining someone's blood, we sometimes give them more blood to save his or her life.

<sup>4</sup> If you ever decide to go into a medical occupation, such as nurse, pharmacist, doctor, dentist, or medical technician, you will learn a lot about blood. Medical procedures, such as blood transfusions, save many lives today. Even if you're not interested in a medical career, it's a good idea to know some facts about blood, for your own health.

<sup>5</sup> Blood has four main parts: plasma, red cells, white cells, and platelets. Plasma is the liquid part. It is 90% water, but contains hundreds of other substances too, including dissolved nutrients, waste products, and chemicals called hormones. Red cells are what give blood its red color. They are little, flat discs that are thinner in the middle. They are very flexible so that they can squeeze through tiny blood vessels. Red cells carry oxygen and carbon dioxide. White cells are round, colorless, and many different sizes. White cells are very important in fighting off infections. Platelets are tiny discs that help a cut to stop bleeding.

<sup>6</sup> Almost everyone has to deal with cuts and scrapes once in a while. Usually it isn't a big deal. You clean out the cut to stop germs from getting in, and then let the blood do its work. Platelets in the blood begin to stick to the edges of the cut. Gradually they form a plug that stops the blood from flowing. Sticky threads form across the cut in different directions, forming a web that holds the plug in place. When you fall and scrape your knee, this is how you get a scab. A scab not only keeps germs out, it also keeps the rest of your blood in!

<sup>7</sup> Sometimes a person loses a lot of blood, for example in a car accident. Then an emergency medical worker may do a blood transfusion. In a blood transfusion, a patient is given blood through a needle, which is placed in one of their veins. The needle is attached to a tube, which is attached to a container of blood.

<sup>8</sup> Where does the blood for transfusions come from? Most of it comes from blood donors. Blood donors are healthy people who volunteer to give blood that can be stored until it is needed to help someone else in a medical emergency. Blood donors are tested to be sure that their blood does not contain germs, and then they may donate blood. Some people donate blood as often as every two months. After a person donates blood, their own body makes new blood to replace the blood that they donated.

<sup>9</sup> Once you know some facts about blood, it doesn't seem so yucky any more.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Science Pd: \_\_\_\_\_

## Blood

<p>1. Blood is part of your _____ system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="radio"/> A Respiratory</li><li><input type="radio"/> B Circulatory</li><li><input type="radio"/> C Skeletal</li><li><input type="radio"/> D Digestive</li></ul>	<p>2. Pharmacist is an occupation in the _____ field.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="radio"/> A Legal</li><li><input type="radio"/> B Literary</li><li><input type="radio"/> C Medical</li><li><input type="radio"/> D Educational</li></ul>
<p>3. A blood transfusion is when _____.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="radio"/> A Blood is given to a person</li><li><input type="radio"/> B Blood is drained from a person</li><li><input type="radio"/> C Blood forms a scab</li><li><input type="radio"/> D A cut is bandaged</li></ul>	<p>4. Blood donors have their blood tested _____.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="radio"/> A To see whether they have had any cuts recently</li><li><input type="radio"/> B To make sure their blood is healthy</li><li><input type="radio"/> C To see whether they have red or white cells</li><li><input type="radio"/> D To see if they have enough</li></ul>
<p>5. The main idea of this article is _____.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="radio"/> A Facts about blood transfusions</li><li><input type="radio"/> B Facts about blood</li><li><input type="radio"/> C Facts about red blood cells</li><li><input type="radio"/> D How people in the Middle Ages cured diseases</li></ul>	<p>6. Which part of blood is especially important in fighting off diseases?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="radio"/> A Red cells</li><li><input type="radio"/> B Plasma</li><li><input type="radio"/> C Platelets</li><li><input type="radio"/> D White cells</li></ul>
<p>7. What have you seen medical workers do to be safe when they are dealing with blood?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>8. Complete this sentence with your own idea. Some people pass out when they see blood because _____.</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>