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A little time, a little plasma

UNL students earn money while helping vaccine development

By Jen Deselms
Senior Reporter

The ads appear in local papers offering money for a little time and a little plasma.

Who answers these ads? They are the young and the old, coming from all occupations and races. They have different reasons. Some donate plasma for money and others to help people. But whatever the reasons, these donors all give plasma that will be manufactured into vaccines and medicine.

Many donors learn about the plasma centers from friends and newspaper ads. Lincoln resident Penny Snyder is one of these donors.

Donating plasma
Snyder has been donating plasma for three months. She said she began donating because she wanted to help other people.

"I wish more people would come in to donate," Snyder said.

Bill Smith, a student at Southeast Community College, has been donating for five years. Smith said he uses his earnings to play golf.

Matt Morton, a UNL sophomore and donor at University Plasma Center, said giving plasma wasn't as bad as he imagined. Morton has been donating for about three months. He became interested in donating because of the money the centers offer.

He said he usually uses the money for extra spending, but now he is using it to buy his girlfriend a birthday present.

Results
The results of a study of 14,000 paid plasma donors published in a North American Biologicals Inc. newsletter showed that 80 percent of plasma donors are males, 22 percent are students, and 85 percent are under 40 years old.

Colette Kiefer-Barton, assistant manager of University Plasma Center, estimated that students make up 30 percent of the center's donors during the summer months and close to 70 percent of the donors during the school year.

The slow times of the year hit when university students leave town, Kiefer-Barton said. The University Plasma Center is located at 1442 O St.

Brent Hoogner, manager trainee at Lincoln Plasma Corp., said that the summer has been a slow time for Lincoln Plasma. Hoogner said part of this summer's decrease in donations may be due to the center's recent relocation from 2021 O St. to 126 N. 14th St.

An hour and a half

Donating usually takes an hour and a half, Hoogner said.

The first donation takes longer because the donor must have a physical, he said.

When donors come to give plasma vital signs are checked, tests are given and a series of medical questions are asked. The process helps determine if a person is a safe donor.

People may not donate if their vital signs fall outside normal ranges, if they are on certain types of medication or if blood test results indicate medical problems. Donating at those times increases the chance of fainting, dizziness and nausea.

During donation

During the actual donation, whole blood is removed from the donor's arm. The blood is then put in a centrifuge and the plasma is separated from the red blood cells. The red blood cells, with a saline solution, are reinfused into the donor's arm.

The plasma is sent to West Germany where it is made into vaccines for hepatitis B and tetanus, and medication for hemophiliacs and shock and burn patients.

Shorts

There are still some internship openings for fall semester with agencies of city and state government, businesses, health care facilities, social services and political organizations. Interested students should contact the Internship Office, Administration Building 121, or call 472-1452.

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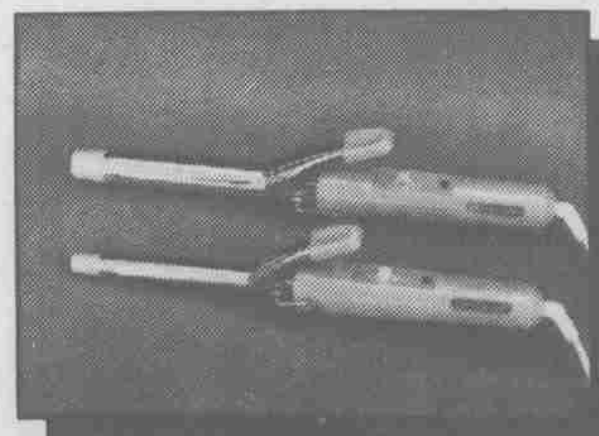
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