Are There Any Risks?

When donating

There are no risks when donating blood. A finger prick test is performed in order to ascertain if your haemoglobin level is within a safe range for donation purposes. In addition, your pulse rate and blood pressure will also be checked.

Potential donors will be permitted to donate only if these measurements are within the defined, acceptable range. If everything is in order you will proceed to donate your blood.

Your body replaces the blood volume (plasma) donated within 24 hours. Red blood cells are replaced by the bone marrow into the circulatory system within three to four weeks, while the lost iron is replaced over approximately six to eight weeks.

- Can one be infected through equipment

No, Certainly not. You cannot get HIV or any other infectious disease by giving blood. The materials used for your blood donation, including the needle, blood bags, tubes and finger prick needle are new, sterile and disposable. These are used only once for your blood donation, dumped in a specialised waste container and incinerated.

- Can HIV be spread through blood donatition

Strict procedures are in place to ensure that donors act responsibly when pledging their support by donating blood. These measures ensure that they are not donating blood as a way of getting free HIV/AIDS test, but for the sole purpose of helping to save lives.

The commitment of our blood donors ensures the safety of blood supply. SANBS attempts to encourage donors to give blood for purely altruistic reasons. People who participate in unsafe lifestyle behaviour such as casual sex, male-to-male sex or taking intravenous drugs are advised not to donate blood.

Donors who deliberately donate to spread the HIV only incur more operational costs for SANBS. These costs are incurred in the form of collection of blood, storage, transportation and testing, ultimately, be discarded. It is also the donor's responsibility to be honest when donating blood.

However SANBS uses a Nucleid Acid Implification Technology (NAT) that detect the HIV 6 - 11 days from the day of infection.