

Now a call centre for blood banks

Doctors, NGO will set up service to inform callers about the nearest place to get blood, and help find donors



Calling for help: The NGO, which is launching the call centre, will also create awareness about the need for donation

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Mrinal Madnani's husband, Roshan, died within two hours of an accident on the Mumbai-Pune highway about two years ago. He died because of a lack of blood. According to Madnani, 42, it was midnight when Roshan was taken to a nursing home in Navi Mumbai, but they said they had exhausted their stock of B+ blood. "We called all our friends and relatives, hoping to find a donor, but we didn't," says Madnani.

Despite Mumbai collecting and stocking about 25 per cent of the total amount of blood collected across the country, it is unfortunate that cases like Roshan's still occur. For Madnani — and many others like her — the problem is a lack of information about the nearest blood bank or similar source.

Now the NGO, Doctors for You, hopes to remedy this problem. It plans to start a call centre that will furnish information about the nearest centre that can provide the required blood group. An announcement about this will be made on Sunday at the launch of the country-wide campaign to boost voluntary blood donation,

entitled 'Safe Blood - Safe India'.

Members of the NGO, which comprises mostly doctors, medical students and engineers, stumbled upon the idea after hearing about cases of desperate families looking for blood and not being able to find it. The centralised information hub will be named the Lifesavers centre. The first of many such centres will come up in Mumbai by May, followed by a second one in Delhi. There will be 10 such centres across the country. "These centres will also work towards promoting voluntary blood donation in the country," says Dr Ravikant Singh, chief coordinator of Doctors for You. He adds that the service will be available 24/7. "We are talking to some corporate groups to provide funds for the project," he says.

Figures show that blood collected through voluntary donations does not even meet 50 per cent of the demand. The current annual blood collection in India amounts to only 4.5 lakh units, while the requirement is of about one crore units per year.

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