

Use of Donor Milk

Why Donor Milk?

Your milk is always the best food for your baby. It protects your baby against germs, breaks down food to make energy and produces vitamins. Your baby needs some of your milk at every feeding. Most moms make tiny amounts of milk in the first few days after their baby is born. Until the milk comes from you, milk from other healthy nursing mothers is the best thing. We mix donor milk with your milk to bridge the gap until your milk supply increases. The American Academy of Pediatrics supports using donor milk when mother's milk is not available.

Human milk:

- Is absorbed better than baby formula.
- Offers better nutrition than baby formula.
- Helps your baby's digestive tract to mature.
- Has an antibody to help fight disease.
- Helps protect your baby from infection.
- Helps protect against allergies.
- Improves eye and brain development.

Milk Donors

Milk donors are healthy mothers who breastfeed their own babies. When they make more milk than their baby can use, they donate the extra milk to a milk bank. Donors don't get paid for their milk.

The Milk Bank Carefully Screens All Donors

The process includes:

- Verbal and written questions
- Consent from the mother's doctor and the baby's doctor
- Blood tests
- Tests to check milk

Donors are screened for medicine use. Only medicines that do not enter the breast milk or do not affect the infant can be taken. Donors and their families must be healthy during the time the mother donates milk.

Donors get instructions on how to collect and handle their milk. They learn how to properly wash their hands, clean their breasts and sterilize their breast pumps. The milk bank gives them sterile collection containers for milk storage.

Donor Milk Quality

Milk from different donors is mixed together to make sure the milk has everything needed for the best growth and protection. All milk is heat-treated or pasteurized. This eliminates bacteria or viruses while keeping most of human milk's beneficial parts. Milk can be used after samples are cultured and show no bacterial growth. This process follows the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA) guidelines. HMBANA promotes the health of babies and mothers through the use of safe pasteurized donor milk and support of breastfeeding.

Human Milk and HIV

Milk from a milk bank has never infected a baby with HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) or any other disease. Only mothers who have tested negative for HIV and have no risk factors for HIV can donate. All milk is pasteurized, which kills HIV. These processes meet the standards of the HMBANA, the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control.

Milk Availability

Our goal is to have milk for every baby who needs it. Milk is given based on a doctor's order and medical need. HMBANA's guidelines include a tool for the sharing of milk in times of shortage. The organization works with other member banks to make sure that all the babies that need human milk are served.

Call the Bronson Mothers' Milk Bank at (269) 341-6146 if you have questions about donated human milk.

Donor Human Milk Thawing Guidelines

- Thaw milk slowly. The best way to thaw milk is overnight in the refrigerator. Milk can be thawed in a bowl of warm water (not hotter than 98 degrees F or 37 degrees C). If using warm water, don't let water reach the top of the container holding the milk.
- Milk should not be warmer than body temperature (98.6 degrees F).
- Never microwave milk or thaw it in hot water. It can destroy the milk's nutritional benefits. It can also heat the milk unevenly, which may burn your baby.
- You can refrigerate thawed milk for later use if it was not heated. Do not refreeze milk once it is thawed.
- Milk may separate during storage. To mix it, thaw it completely. Then swirl it before pouring.
- Store thawed milk in the refrigerator for up to 48 hours. Your refrigerator should be set to 39 degrees F.