



Donor human milk for your baby

Donor milk is never intended as a replacement for mothers own milk and is meant to provide human milk where there is a medical need.

What is a donor milk bank?

The Human Milk Bank takes surplus donated human milk which is screened, pasteurised, and then given to babies in the neonatal unit or maternity ward on a priority basis. The pasteurisation process has a minor impact on the quality of the milk.

Donor mothers have completed a human donor breastmilk health screen and undertaken blood tests to ensure that the milk is as safe as possible from known infections and medications/drugs and nicotine.

Donor human milk is only given to your baby with your consent. The supply of other milk given to your baby is reviewed at seven days. Staff will discuss strategies for optimising your own milk supply. Early frequent expressing is critical in establishing a full milk supply.

Why should I use donor milk?

Human milk is best for all babies. It is particularly important for premature and critically ill babies as it reduces the risk of certain complications. The aim of our Human Milk Bank is that human milk is available to infants in Christchurch Women's Hospital that fulfil the priority criteria.

Human milk contains over 200 components that are useful for growth and infant health:

- It assists in building a healthy immune system.
- Acts to protect babies from infections.
- Contains easily digestible proteins.
- Reduces the risk of bowel problems in preterm infants.
- Contributes to nervous system and brain growth.

The donor milk bank appreciates both the support from the donor mothers and those who wish to contribute financially to maintain this facility.