



Introduction to the Human Milk Bank

Parent/Caregiver/Whānau Information – Neonatal Services

Introduction

Breastmilk is the optimal food for all babies. A breastmilk diet is especially important for premature and critically ill babies. Premature and sick babies have higher nutritional requirements.

Mothers with babies admitted to the NICU may be initially unable to provide their milk due to illness, medication or low milk supply.

Breastmilk donors are required to complete a lifestyle/health questionnaire and to have blood tests to detect any blood borne infections. Factors that may exclude a donor from donating include smoking, drinking alcohol regularly, taking certain medications or misusing drugs. The mothers who volunteer to donate their breastmilk to the Human Milk Bank are healthy and producing more milk than their own baby needs.

What is a human milk bank?

This is a facility that accepts donated breastmilk from healthy breastfeeding mothers who have met screening requirements. The milk is pasteurised (heat-treated) and tested for bacteria + viruses. The pasteurised milk is then frozen as soon as possible after pasteurising. Once cleared, the pasteurised milk can then be dispensed to babies that meet specified criteria in the NICU, maternity, other wards or hospitals.

How can I become a donor?

Ask your midwife, neonatal nurse or health professional who will be able to direct you to how to access the 'donating your milk' pamphlet. The milk bank contact details are in the pamphlet. Becoming a donor has 2 steps.

Step 1 is to fill out a health questionnaire and a consent to donate form which can be accessed by emailing the milk bank at: milkbanknicu@cdhb.health.nz. These forms can be filled in on your phone or computer. If you can't access the forms online, we can mail them to you.

Step 2 involves having a blood test. The blood test form will be sent to you once the milk bank staff have had a chance to go through the initial health check. Blood tests can be done at your local hospital or community blood collection centre.

For further information on how to become a milk donor please access the Te Whatu Ora Waitaha Canterbury Human Milk Bank on the Te Whatu Ora Waitaha Canterbury webpage, or contact the milk bank manager (021 190 5008) who will guide you through the process.



Human Milk
for
Our Babies

The Human Milk Bank appreciates both the support from the donor mothers, volunteers and those who contribute financially to maintain this service.