



INSTRUCTIONS AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR HUMAN MILK DONORS



Introduction

Breastmilk is the optimal food for babies and is particularly important for premature and critically ill babies. These babies have higher very specific nutritional and immunity needs. Mothers may be unable to provide milk for their baby for a number of reasons including maternal illness, prescription medications or low milk supply. We have a facility for accepting donor human milk to help in these situations.

Mothers who volunteer to donate to the human donor milk bank are usually producing more milk than their baby needs.

If you are interested in becoming a human milk donor we require you to complete a lifestyle questionnaire and to undertake blood tests. Factors that may exclude you from becoming a donor include smoking, drinking alcohol regularly, taking certain medications or recreational drugs.



What is the Human Donor Milk Bank?

This is a facility that accepts donated human milk from registered screened donors which is then pasteurised and stored frozen until required.



How can I become a donor?

If you are still interested in becoming a human milk donor after reading this pamphlet you will be guided through the process by NICU/Milk Bank staff. You can also complete the lifestyle questionnaire and consent form on the Human Milk Bank website and return these to the Human Donor Milk Bank.

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



Information for mothers who are expressing and donating milk

Thank you for the gift of your breastmilk to the Human Donor Milk Bank.

If your baby is in the Neonatal Unit, you may be using one of our hospital grade electric breast pumps. If you are at home and using your own breast pump, the milk bank staff will assess the suitability of the pump for expressing.

As a donor you will receive the following:

- Lifestyle questionnaire
- Consent to donate form
- Expressing equipment – if required and available
- Sterile collection bottles
- Expressing labels for the collection bottles
- Human Milk Bank donor card
- Plastic bags and ties
- Amounts tag

It is important to keep everything as clean as possible to avoid contaminating the milk for donation. Before you start expressing, please ensure you read the general hygiene guidelines.

Milk production depends on milk removal or 'supply and demand'. There is no absolute right time to express – express when it is convenient for you and ensure that you express often enough to encourage production. One option for expressing is when your baby only feeds on one side — just express the other side after the feed. You will find what works for you.



Contacting the Human Donor Milk Bank

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Human Donor Milk Bank.

Phone: (03) 364 4344

Email: milkbanknicu@cdhb.health.nz

Website: google/CDHB Human Donor Milk Bank.

The milk bank hours are on the back of this brochure. If urgent, ask to speak to the Neonatal Unit ACNM on (03) 364 4699, who will contact the Milk Bank Manager.



Frequently asked questions for human milk donors

Who can donate human milk?

Any mother who wishes to provide the gift of human milk for the Human Donor Milk Bank is invited to complete the lifestyle questionnaire and screening blood tests. Any milk provided is in excess of her own baby's needs, growth and development.

Why donate?

A key concern for premature babies is a severe gut disorder called NEC (Necrotising Enterocolitis). Human milk is associated with lowering the risk of NEC. Donating to a milk bank ensures screened and pasteurised donor milk is available for these premature and other vulnerable babies.

What steps are required to be a donor?

You will be requested to complete a lifestyle questionnaire. Following this you will be asked to have a blood test to screen for infections that can be transmitted through breastmilk.

What are the blood tests I will consent to?

The screening blood tests will include HIV 1 & 2, Hepatitis B and C, HTLV 1 & 2. HTLV 1 & 2 are risk factors for the onset of adult leukaemia and lymphoma. **The blood tests are done at no cost to you.**

How much do I need to donate?

Keep freezing your breastmilk until you have approximately 1 litre of milk to donate. Single donations will be considered for mothers who have a moderate to large supply of excess milk that has been stored frozen for up to 3 months.

What happens to my milk if it is not used?

There are a variety of reasons why your milk may not be suitable for use by the donor milk bank although acceptable for your own baby. We will contact you to discuss this if it is the case. Milk that has been donated but cannot be dispensed is offered to research groups and your permission is requested as part of the consent process.

What happens if I take medications, drink alcohol and/or smoke?

Most prescribed medications are compatible with breastfeeding your own baby but need to be discussed when donating milk for the milk bank (for instance, blood pressure medications, antibiotics, or even herbal medicines need to be discussed). We would also like to discuss if you have had recent vaccinations or travelled/lived overseas. We discourage drinking alcohol while you are expressing for the milk bank. We also support a smoke free policy. It is important that you provide accurate details regarding your prescribed and social drug use, alcohol intake and smoking habits.

What happens if I am unwell?

You should continue to breastfeed your baby as usual and express milk for comfort as necessary. You may use this expressed milk for your own baby. If you have a fever or are unwell we advise you not to donate your milk to the Human Donor Milk Bank.

If you feel unwell, place a 'U' on the donation bottle at that time so it can be identified in the future. Place an 'M' on the bottle if you take medications in the 24 hours before expressing for the Milk Bank.

Will you accept frozen milk?

We generally accept milk that has been frozen up to 3 months from the date it was expressed. We are also able to accept older milk under special circumstances. Please ask the Milk Bank for advice before discarding your milk. You must, however, meet the donor criteria.

What happens to the milk before it is given to the babies?

Initially you freeze your milk at home and it will remain there until you have used up all your bottles or accumulated at least 1 litre of milk to donate. On arrival at the bank your milk is given a unique number and remains frozen until required for pasteurisation. A sample is checked for a bacterial count and then is heat treated (pasteurised). A further check of the bacterial count may occur on random samples for quality control purposes.

Will I be paid?

No. All our donors are volunteers.

What equipment will I need?

The milk bank will supply you with a donor pack that will include bottles, labels, bags and tags and a donor card. It is assumed that you will already be using a breast pump.

Will I be able to meet the babies who are receiving my milk?

No. Your contact will be with the Milk Bank staff. We hope to organise yearly meetings where donors get to meet other donors and Milk Bank staff as a way of thanking you for your contribution.

Are my details confidential?

All information collected in relation to your donation will be shared with CDHB staff as appropriate. This information, except personal information about the recipients of your milk, will be placed on your general medical record and shared with your GP as appropriate. Your details will not appear on the pasteurised milk.

I am unable to supply milk but wish to support the milk bank

Donations to the Canterbury Neonatal Unit Trust Fund (Westpac Papanui Branch, 030854 0584185 00) who funded the establishment of the Milk Bank are appreciated from those who wish to contribute financially to maintain this facility. This may be one off or in the form of on going fundraising. Details can be found on our website.



Human milk storage information

This applies to mothers who are storing their expressed milk at home. Hand hygiene and cleaning of the electric pump parts are very important.

Storage guidelines

- Collect milk in the sterile bottles supplied by the Human Donor Milk Bank.
- Store milk from each expression in separate bottles.
- Leave a gap of 2 cm at the top of each bottle to allow for expansion when the milk freezes.
- Use the labels provided to label each bottle with the date of milk expression.
- Place the labelled bottles of milk in the plastic bag provided.
- Freeze expressed milk for the Human Donor Milk Bank as soon as possible after each expression — immediately is best.

If you do not have a freezer please ask for advice from the Human Donor Milk Bank staff.

How long can I store frozen expressed breastmilk?

- 2 weeks in the freezer section located inside a refrigerator
- 3 months in a separate door refrigerator/freezer
- 6 months in a deep freeze or chest freezer

Community pick up for donations

The Human Donor Milk Bank has a weekly community pick up service for your donations.

You can also drop off your donations directly to the Milk Bank (NICU reception, 4th floor, Christchurch Women's Hospital) providing the donation remains frozen and the drop off has been prearranged. Please bring your donor card.



General hygiene when expressing at home

Routine hand washing decreases the risk of contamination of pumps, pump parts, storage containers and expressed milk.

Hand hygiene

Before expressing milk or handling equipment:

1. Wash your hands by lathering with soap and hot water, or use an alcohol-based hand rub (these can be purchased from your supermarket).
We encourage you to keep your finger nails short.
2. Dry hands with disposable paper towels. Use the towel to turn off tap.
3. Daily washing/showering is sufficient for breast hygiene purposes.

Pump hygiene

Keep the outside of the breast pump and tubing clean and wipe away any milk spots:

1. Ensure your hands are clean and dry.
2. Dismantle and wash the breast kit parts after each pumping session.
3. A separate bowl or container should be used to wash the milk collection kit to avoid contamination from the skin.
4. Rinse breast kit parts in cool water to remove residue, then wash all parts in hot soapy water (washing-up detergent) to clean. Use a designated toothbrush or bottle brush for removing any solidified milk.
5. Rinse in hot water to wash off detergent residues.
6. Shake off excess water.
7. For mothers staying in the neonatal unit who already use tablet disinfectant please continue to use that method.
8. For mothers at home place the milk collection kit between dry paper towels to air dry and place in a zip lock bag when dried. Alternatively, boil the parts for 5 minutes or use a microwave/steam sterilising unit.

The Neonatal Unit will provide additional labels for you on request.

Human Milk Bank, Christchurch Women's Hospital, Neonatal Unit, 2 Riccarton Ave, Christchurch
Google — CDHB Human Milk Bank | milkbanknicu@cdhb.health.nz | 03 364 4344

Acknowledgments

Canterbury Neonatal Unit Trust
Chair: Paul McEwan

References

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