

INFORMATION FOR DONORS

Could you be a breast milk donor?

If you have decided to breastfeed your baby, you will know that breast milk is the ideal food for all infants and is especially important for babies who are sick or premature. Giving these babies breast milk increases their chances of survival and helps their long term development.

Sometimes, for a variety of reasons, mothers with the desire and will to breastfeed cannot do so. They may be too unwell or under too much stress to produce enough milk.

The Mothers Milk Bank has been set up to help these babies and their mothers through the pasteurisation and distribution of breast milk donated by breastfeeding mothers. The Mothers Milk Bank welcomes all enquiries from women who are breastfeeding or planning to breastfeed in the future.

Can any breastfeeding mother be a donor?

All potential donors are required to fill out a questionnaire and undertake a blood test. The Mothers Milk Bank needs to know you are in good health. You will be asked questions pertaining to your medical history, any medical conditions and/or lifestyle choices that may make you ineligible to donate to the milk bank.

The Mothers Milk Bank will be unable to accept your milk if you:

- Are a smoker
- Use illegal drugs or other prohibited substances
- Routinely consume more than 2 standard alcoholic drinks per day
- Routinely consume 3 cups of coffee or other caffeine or stimulant containing drinks per day (i.e. Coke, guarana and or stimulant soft drinks, cocoa, hot chocolate)
- Have tested positive for HIV 1 or 2, Hepatitis B or C HTLV I or II or Syphilis.

If you have a medical condition or routinely take medications including herbal remedies, you may be eligible to donate but a milk bank consultant may need to talk with you further.

Although your milk is perfect for your own child, extra care needs to be taken when distributing donor milk to sick and premature infants. Some diseases and infections can be transmitted through breast milk. Although these diseases and infections are eliminated during the pasteurisation process, blood tests for potential donor mothers are a necessity.

This screening process is similar to that of blood donors and the tests are additional to the ones already undergone before giving birth to your baby. You will also be required to undergo further blood tests if you donate to the milk bank over a long period of time. These additional tests will be required at 3 monthly intervals and three months after you cease donating to the milk bank. The Mothers Milk Bank can arrange these tests for you with your GP. Please consult the Mothers Milk Bank brochure – BLOOD TESTS FOR MILK BANK DONORS – for further information.

All personal information and test results obtained by the Mothers Milk Bank are held in strict confidence. The Mothers Milk Bank is required by law to ensure the confidentiality of our donor mothers. Each donor is registered with an donor number which is the only identification used when processing and distributing the milk.

How much milk do milk banks expect from donors?

If you have an extra surplus of stored milk that you do not need for your baby, a one-off donation of this milk will also be accepted providing it has been stored in a deep freeze and is no more than 3 months old.

If you become a regular donor to the milk bank, there are no rules about how much milk you should express. The amount of milk collected from each donor varies from woman to woman and week to week. You donate what you can and every drop of milk is valuable. Small and sick infants benefit from the tiniest quantities and premature babies will often start with less than 20mls per day.

It is a good idea to establish breastfeeding before you begin to express for the milk bank. Most donors start within a month of their baby's birth and continue for as long as they wish. It is also helpful to establish a regular routine such as expressing at the same time each day as it is much more difficult to maintain a supply of milk if you only express occasionally. Some donors prefer expressing in the morning, others find it easiest to express from one breast whilst their baby is feeding from the other.

Over time, your body adjusts the amount of milk you produce to meet the changing needs of your baby. It will also respond in the same way if you express regularly. If you are worried that your own child may not be getting enough, you can express after your baby has fed. The law of supply and demand will ensure however, that you are still producing enough milk for your baby.

Milk donors, like all breastfeeding mothers benefit from a healthy diet and plenty of rest.

FAQs

May I drink alcohol?

There is no harm in drinking occasional small amounts of alcohol whilst you are a milk donor. It is best however, to leave as much time as possible between taking the alcohol and expressing and you should avoid drinking more than 2 standard drinks. Alcohol leaves your breast milk approximately 2 hours after consumption.

May I eat chocolate?

Chocolate and other cocoa and caffeine containing foods have been observed to directly affect the behaviour of breastfed children. As with alcohol, please ensure that you leave as much time as possible between consumption and expressing for the milk bank. At least 2 hours is necessary.

What if I am ill?

Please let the milk bank know if you are unwell. Most minor illnesses will not affect your milk. However, if you are feeling unwell you may want to stop donating for a while.

What if I have taken any medications?

Breast milk is only suitable for donation to the milk bank if you have taken no medications or herbal remedies in the 48 hours before expressing. If you wish to express anyway and keep the milk for your own baby, it is important that you label the milk accordingly.

What if I have vaccinations whilst a milk donor?

Please inform the milk bank if you are about to have, or have recently had any vaccinations.

Are all of my details obtained by the Mothers Milk Bank confidential?

The Mothers Milk Bank is required by law to maintain the confidentiality of donors with each donor receiving a donor number as identification.

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

Generally individual donors do not meet the specific babies, mothers or families who receive their milk. This is part of the Mothers Milk Bank confidentiality policy. The Milk Bank will however, facilitate a donor and recipient support network and organise open days where families involved with the milk bank may meet other families, health professionals and interested members of the community. The Mothers Milk Bank also provides an online forum where donors and recipients families can communicate, discuss various issues and offer support and advice.

What equipment do I need and how do I store my expressed milk?

The Mothers Milk Bank will provide you with a Donor Kit including a breast pump and sterilised collection bottles and labels. For all the information pertaining to the best practice for expressing and storing donor milk, please consult the Australian Breastfeeding Association booklet – EXPRESSING AND STORING MILK – also included in your Donor Kit.

What arrangements will be made to get the milk to the milk bank?

The Mothers Milk Bank will make arrangements to collect your milk at a time that is convenient to you. Alternatively, you may bring it to the milk bank or a designated storage facility. If bringing it in person to the milk bank, an insulated bag or esky, ideally with ice packs, is essential to ensure the milk remains frozen during transit.

What are the blood tests?

For more information about the blood tests required, please consult the AMMBA leaflet – BLOOD TESTS FOR MILK BANK DONORS.

If you are interested in becoming a donor, please contact the Mothers Milk Bank.

**Mothers Milk Bank
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The information in this booklet is based on the United Kingdom Association for Milk Banking (UKAMB) guidelines, updated 2005; and compiled in accordance with the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HUMBANA) “Best Practice Guidelines” ,2006 and the “Standard Operating Procedures and Protocol for Milk Banking in Australia“ published by the Mothers Milk Bank (MMB), 2007.

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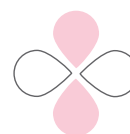
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Mothers Milk Bank **DRAFT** Brochure

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