



Mothers' Milk Bank Charity

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Blood Tests

For Milk Bank Donors and Donor Mother Screening

If you are a breastfeeding mother with an abundant milk supply, your donated milk will improve the health of an infant who desperately requires human milk to grow and develop.

This document outlines the screening procedure and tests required when becoming a donor mother.

Can any breastfeeding mother become a milk bank donor?

Although your milk is perfect for your child, extra care needs to be taken when distributing donor milk to sick and premature infants. Before the Mothers' Milk Bank Charity can accept your donated breast milk, we need to ask you a number of questions about your general health and lifestyle. This screening process is similar to that of blood donors. You will be asked questions about your medical history and any medical conditions and/or lifestyle choices that may make you ineligible to donate.

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

- Are a smoker.
- Use illegal drugs or other 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 or stimulant soft drinks, hot chocolate or cocoa).
- Have tested positive for HIV, Hepatitis B or C, HTLV 1 or 2, or Syphilis.
- Have lived in the United Kingdom between the years 1982-1995 and may be at risk of Creutz Jakob Disease (CJD).

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

Blood Tests

For Milk Bank Donors

As a donor mother, you will be asked to have a blood test. This blood test is additional to the ones already undergone before giving birth to your baby.

If donating to the Mothers' Milk Bank Charity over a long period of time, you will also be required to undergo further blood tests. These will be required at three monthly intervals and additionally, three months after you cease donating to the Milk Bank. These blood tests can be arranged through your attending physician or General Practitioner.

Some diseases and infections can be transmitted through breast milk. Although they are eliminated during the pasteurisation process, blood tests ensure the absence of any of these infections pre-pasteurisation.

Your blood will be tested for:

HIV

Human Immunodeficiency Virus, the virus responsible for AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). AIDS is the names given to a collection of diseases that develop because the body's immune system breaks down. It is possible to carry HIV for many years without becoming ill.

Hepatitis B and C

Viruses that infect the liver cells and can cause inflammation of the liver.

HTLV 1 and 2

Human T-cell Leukemia virus types 1 and 2 are most common in Southern Japan, the Caribbean, parts of Africa, South America and south eastern USA. Many people who carry these viruses may display no symptoms even though they will be infectious.

Syphilis

A sexually transmitted bacterial infection.

CMV (Cytomegalovirus)

Blood tests for CMV is required, even though this virus is destroyed on freezing and through pasteurisation.

These infections can be passed on in a number of ways.

Through unprotected sexual intercourse.
Through the sharing of needles.
Via blood transfusions.
Via breast milk.
Via tattoos and body piercing if non-sterile equipment is used.

Once negative test results have been received, a Mothers' Milk Bank Charity consultant will contact you regarding the donation and collection of your milk.

In the event of a positive result for any of these conditions, you will be referred to a specialist for additional help and counselling.

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

If you have any further queries or concerns regarding these infections and possible transmission, please contact your Mothers' Milk Bank Charity consultant immediately.