

Donating Milk

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Whether you're a new mother considering milk donation, a seasoned donor looking for guidance, or simply curious about the process, we've compiled this collection of frequently asked questions to offer clarity and support.

Our aim is to provide you with accurate information, address any concerns you may have, and empower you to make informed decisions about becoming a milk donor.

mothersmilkbank.com.au/donate-milk

WITHIN THESE FAQs

You'll discover insights into the benefits of milk donation, the eligibility criteria for donors, the donation process itself, storage and the safety measures in place to ensure that donated milk is of the highest quality.

We also explore common concerns such as how to store and transport donated milk, as well as the ethical and emotional aspects of milk donation.

Thank you for considering milk donation as a way to contribute to the health and well-being of many infants in need.

Let these FAQs be your trusted companion as you embark on this meaningful adventure, ensuring that your decision is based on knowledge, empathy, and the desire to make the world a better place for the tiniest among us.



EACH DONOR'S JOURNEY IS UNIQUE

These FAQs are here to serve as a reliable guide, regardless of where you are in your milk donation journey.

Donating breastmilk is a selfless and impactful way to provide vital nourishment to infants in need, and we understand that you may have a range of inquiries before embarking on this journey.

Whether you're driven by compassion, the desire to help premature infants, or with a surplus of milk, your generosity can make a profound difference in the lives of vulnerable newborns and their families.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Opting to donate milk naturally raises a multitude of questions, and each one holds significant importance. Here, we address some of the inquiries we encounter most frequently.

HAVE OTHER QUESTIONS? Send us an email or message us through our website contact page

OUR NON-PAYMENT POLICY

Do you buy breastmilk?

No, we do NOT buy breastmilk. All of our generous donors are volunteers. Research and history have shown that paying donors adds risks both to the milk recipient and to the baby whose milk is sold. This is a complicated medical and ethical issue that has been discussed, debated, and regulated for millennia, and continues today.

DONOR ELIGIBILITY

Am I eligible to be a donor?

To ensure that your donated milk will be safe to use, you will need to complete our online Donor Registration and Screening Consent form. These questions are similar to those asked when you want to become a blood donor. We ask that you be as accurate and honest as you can with your answers. Any information given is strictly confidential.

You are unable to donate if you:

- have been declined as a blood donor for a medical reason (other than pregnancy or nursing)
- have tested positive for HIV, Hepatitis, Tuberculosis or have a history of cancer
- have injected drugs not prescribed by a doctor
- smoke or use tobacco products (including nicotine patches or gum) per day, (i.e., Cola, Energy Drinks, hot chocolate, etc)
- regularly consume more than two standard alcoholic drinks per day
- regularly consume more than 750ml (three cups) of tea, coffee, cola or stimulant soft drinks per day

You may be unable to donate breastmilk if, in the last 12 months, you have:

- had close contact (cohabitation or intimate contact) with someone with hepatitis, or someone at risk of AIDS or HIV (including haemophiliacs and IV drug users)

You may be unable to donate breastmilk if, in the last 6 months, you have:

- had ear or body piercing
- had a tattoo or permanent makeup
- had an accidental needle stick injury

You may be unable to donate breastmilk if, in the last 3 months, you have:

- received a blood transfusion or blood products
- vaccinations that may impact your donation (i.e. travel vaccination)

If you have a medical condition or routinely take medications and/or herbal supplements, you may be eligible to donate once discussed with our staff.

WHAT BLOOD TESTS ARE REQUIRED?

HUMAN
IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS
(HIV)

HIV is responsible for AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). AIDS is the name 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 & C VIRUSES
(HEP B & C)

Hep B and C are viruses that infect the liver cells and can cause inflammation of the liver.

HUMAN T-CELL LEUKEMIA
VIRUS TYPES 1 & 2
(HTLV 1 & 2)

HTLV 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.

CYTOMEGALOVIRUS (CMV)

Blood tests for CMV are 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 breastmilk
- Via tattoos and body piercing if non-sterile equipment is used

Would you like to learn more about us?
mothersmilkbank.com.au/about-us



STORAGE

Do you supply breastmilk storage bags?

Unfortunately not, but as we are a registered charity with a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) Item 1 status, if you keep your receipts, you can claim the cost of the storage bags that you have given us, as a tax deduction.

Please note, we can only accept donated milk is sterile, single use storage bags. We cannot accept breastmilk that has been stored in Ziplock bags.

AMOUNT OF MILK

Is there a minimum amount that I need to donate?

Due to the cost of transportation and pasteurisation, we require donors to donate a minimum of 2 litres. If you live outside of a major capital city, a higher minimum amount may apply.

DURATION OF DONORING

How long can I be a donor?

Once donor screening is finished, there is no limit on how long you can be a donor. We are happy to accept any milk that is pumped during the time that you are pumping for your baby.

MEDICATIONS

Why is my medication a reason for deferral?

We follow different guidelines than you might see in other places because of the fragile health of the babies who receive donor milk. Something may be perfectly safe for your healthy baby, but not safe for the babies receiving donor milk.

RECIPIENT PRIVACY

Can I meet the baby who receives my breastmilk?

Due to the Mothers Milk Bank Charity confidentiality policy, individual donors do not meet the specific babies, mothers or families who receive their milk.

WHY PASTERISATION?

How does pasteurisation affect breastmilk?

All donor milk is pasteurised in order to eliminate bacteria or other infecting organisms that may have been present.

A small percentage of nutritional and immunological properties is destroyed by pasteurisation, but pasteurised donor milk retains many of its most beneficial qualities. It contains many special properties that cannot be duplicated by commercial milk formulas.

TIME LIMITS

Are there time limits on how old my milk can be?

Yes, and it is dependent on what type of freezer you have stored your milk in.

- In a combined fridge/freezer (1 door), your breastmilk can be stored for 2 weeks (-15°C).
- In a fridge/freezer (2 doors), your breastmilk can be stored for 3 months (-18°C).
- In a standalone/chest freezer, your breastmilk can be stored for 6 to 12 months (-20°C).

We encourage you to peruse our website for further resources and research.

Contact Us
(07) 3260 6609

enquiry@mothersmilkbank.com.au
mothersmilkbank.com.au



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Visit Us
Lot 9, Unit 15
62 Crockford Street
Northgate, QLD 4013

Monday - Friday
9:00am to 5:00pm AEST