

FAQ: DONATING HUMAN MILK

This document is provided for nurses, lactation consultants and any other professionals who may be asked questions from mothers who want to donate their surplus human milk. If you have any further questions please contact Laraine Lockhart Borman, Director of Outreach at Mothers' Milk Bank at 303.869.1888 or mothersmilkbank@rmchildren.org.

What are the qualifications to become a donor for Mothers' Milk Bank?

Mothers' Milk Bank Medical Advisory Council and the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA) have established qualifications for becoming a donor. In order to become a donor, one must:

- Produce milk in excess of her own baby's needs
- Be in excellent health without any chronic illness
- Have received no blood or blood products in the past 12 months
- Have no history of hepatitis (after age 11) or illicit I.V. drug use
- Have no history of intimate contact with anyone at risk for HIV/AIDS in the past 12 months
- Be a non-smoker
- Take only approved medications or herbs
- Be motivated to carry out meticulous milk collection and storage
- Undergo blood testing
- Have medical authorization forms signed by her and her baby's own healthcare providers

What kind of screening process do your human milk donors go through?

If you believe you meet the qualifications to become a donor, please call 303.869.1888 to begin the screening process with one of our lactation consultants.

- A lactation consultant will perform a thorough lactation assessment and medical history screening over the phone to determine if you meet the health requirements
- Signed Provider Forms must also be obtained from your health care provider and the health care provider of your baby acknowledging that you would qualify as a donor
- We will also work with you to arrange a blood test, which will test for Hepatitis, HIV-1/2, HTLV-I&II, and syphilis
- Once approved, you will receive detailed instructions in the hygienic collection and handling of milk

How much milk do I have to be willing to donate in order to become a donor?

While we greatly appreciate any mothers' interest in becoming a donor, we ask that you try to donate at least 150 ounces.

My doctor told me that the medication I was taking was okay for me to take when I was pumping my milk and breastfeeding my baby. Why can't I donate my milk if the medication is alright for my baby?

Your doctor knows about your baby's health and knows that your baby will be fine with the medication you are taking. All medications enter the blood stream and some of it also enters the milk you are pumping. The babies we serve are very fragile. Some of them are preterm babies as small as 1 pound and very sick. Mothers' Milk Bank must be very conservative and protect these little ones so we are not able to take milk during the time you are taking most medication.

I don't live in Colorado. Can I still become a donor?

Yes! You would go through the same screening process as our local donors. We have donation sites all over the United States where you could drop off your milk. We can also arrange for you to ship your milk, at no cost to you.

I have frozen milk that I would like to donate, but I was screened after I pumped it. Can I still donate it?

Yes, as long as you were not on any medication when the milk was pumped and you were not sick at the time.

My baby is over a year old. Can I still donate milk?

We are able to accept milk up until the baby is 18-months-old as long as the mother is fully lactating, which means pumping or breastfeeding at least four times per day and collecting a minimum of three ounces per pumping.