Informal Milk Sharing

The Federal Drug Administration (FDA), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA), among many other professional groups, have all published position statements on informal sharing of human milk.

The AAP states, "informal direct milk sharing without pasteurization exposes infants to a range of possible risks, including bacterial contamination and viral transmission" and "Health care providers should discourage families from direct human milk sharing or purchasing human milk from the Internet because of the increased risks of bacterial or viral contamination of non-pasteurized milk and the possibility of exposure to medications, drugs, or other substances, including cow milk protein."

In contrast, another group, Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine's (ABM) recent statement says, "Physicians and other healthcare providers can advise recipients on medical screening of donors for illnesses and medications that are contraindicated." The statement gives a chart for this screening of potential donors including medications and blood tests as well as information about home flash pasteurization of milk. In addition, stating, "providers should instruct both donors and recipients on safe milk handling and storage practices."

Is it practical to ask healthcare professionals who already have a full plate to help families screen potential milk donors, making arrangements for blood tests for potential donors who are not patients in their practice? The ABM recommends sharing a method for high temperature uncontrolled pasteurization of milk, which will most certainly have a large detrimental effect on the important components of milk. This seems out of the scope of practice and leaves great potential for human error if not done correctly. This puts babies' lives at grave risk.

A majority of healthcare professionals know how important human milk is to infants - babies are healthier when they have access to mom's own milk - yet some mothers have difficulty producing an adequate milk supply. Mothers have been sharing milk and nursing each other's babies since time began. However, we live in a different world than our ancestors with many different challenges including a wider variety of diseases, greater access to dangerous drugs, and multiple platforms for "black markets" where sales of untreated and contaminated milk can threaten the life of infants.
Donor human milk that is thoroughly screened, processed and tested from Mothers' Milk Bank and other non-profit milk banks is the safest and simply the best nourishment to offer a newborn for whom their own mother's milk is unavailable.

**A New Look in 2018**

Rocky Mountain Children's Health Foundation (RMCHF) and Mothers' Milk Bank are excited to introduce a new look this year!

Our new logo, "Cradle Heart," represents an updated mission - *to improve the quality of life for families, sick children and infants throughout our communities by providing support when and how they need it most.* This special icon logo conveys RMCHF's core values of caring, compassion and empathy.

Cradle Heart also unites the programs of RMCHF, specifically Mothers' Milk Bank and The Stink Bug Project, under one visual brand identity. The new MMB icon keeps the flower imagery of MMB's existing mark but expands it to include the heart and imagery from the RMCHF parent logo.

We believe that every child deserves the opportunity to feel healthy, happy and supported. Through patient and family assistance, education and donor human milk, we help families and children because communities are stronger when their families are healthy and supported.

In the coming weeks, you'll see our new look on our website and Facebook page. If you have any questions, please contact Christine, Director of Communications & PR, at christine.patoff@rmchildren.org.

**Prescribe Donor Milk**

Donor human milk is the first choice for all babies anytime moms' own milk is unavailable. It is essential for any baby with a weakened immune system or special dietary needs. To learn more about prescribing donor human milk from Mothers' Milk Bank to infants in your care, please visit our website to view a short introductory video.

**Potential Milk Donors**

Human milk is a gift that last a lifetime and we rely on healthcare providers to encourage patients with excess milk to become milk donors. **If you have a patient with an established milk supply and healthy baby, please have her contact us.** Women interested in becoming donors should visit our website for more information.

**About Mothers' Milk Bank**
A nonprofit program of Rocky Mountain Children's Health Foundation, Mothers' Milk Bank (MMB) collects, tests, processes and provides donor human milk to babies across the country. Babies who receive the milk may be premature or have severe illnesses and need human milk to thrive.

MMB consistently provides more milk to NICUs than any other nonprofit milk bank in North America and adheres to the strict guidelines of the Human Milk Banking Association of North America.

Dedicated to babies. Dedicated to quality. Dedicated to safety.

Mothers’ Milk Bank | 303.869.1888 | milkbankcolorado.org

A program of

Rocky Mountain Children’s Health Foundation

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