CANNABIS & HUMAN MILK

Two recent studies about cannabis use while breastfeeding, both done with Colorado connections, may have implications for your patients. With marijuana use during pregnancy and lactation on the rise due to legalization in more states, these researchers are filling a gap in knowledge about this important health topic.

The first study, conducted by Thomas Hale PhD and colleagues, looked at the transfer of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) into human milk after maternal inhalation of a prescribed amount of cannabis. Eight anonymous women from Colorado enrolled in the study and were instructed to discontinue any cannabis use for 24 hours, provide a sample of their milk, then smoke the prescribed amount of cannabis and collect milk at 20 minutes, one, two and four hours. The results showed that THC was transferred into milk at 2.5% of the maternal dose.

The second study, done by researchers at the University of Colorado (CU) School of Public Health, used Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) data from 2014 and 2015. In this group, 5.7% reported using marijuana during pregnancy and 5% during breastfeeding. They discovered that prenatal marijuana use was associated with a 50% increased chance of low birth weight in babies regardless of tobacco use. Prenatal marijuana use was four times higher among women who were younger, less educated, received Medicaid or WIC, were white, unmarried and lived in poverty. The study suggests that prenatal cannabis use has a detrimental impact on a baby's brain function starting in toddlerhood, specifically issues related to attention deficit disorder. 88% of women who use cannabis in pregnancy also breastfeed their babies. Another study underway at CU School of Public Health is looking at these effects and the results will also add important information to the body of knowledge on this topic.

Mothers' Milk Bank (MMB) quickly realized that cannabis use could be an issue after marijuana was legalized in Colorado for medical uses in 2001 and recreationally in 2012. While questions about medication and drugs of abuse have always been asked on the donor screening form of the milk donation process, MMB wanted to know if the screening actually worked to prevent these potentially harmful drugs from entering the milk itself. MMB is happy to report that after testing more than one million ounces of milk, no positive results have been found in donated milk from screened donors.

While more research on cannabis in pregnancy and lactation needs to be done and
considered for one's health care practice and patients, MMB will continue to provide donor human milk that is tested for drugs of abuse for babies who need it.

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**Colorado's First 'Baby Café'**

Mothers' Milk Bank is excited to announce the opening of our very own Baby Café - *the first in Colorado*!

Baby Café is a safe and cozy place where new and expecting parents can gather to support one another on their breastfeeding journey while receiving free guidance and tips from a breastfeeding specialist.

Please join us, and encourage your patients to as well, for our Grand Opening celebration on Friday, May 18th at 10:00 AM. Or join us every Friday at Baby Café from 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM. Light snacks, coffee and tea will be provided.

Questions? Please contact us at [donorrelations@rmchildren.org](mailto:donorrelations@rmchildren.org).

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**Prescribe Donor Milk**

Donor human milk is the first choice for all babies anytime mom's 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.

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**Potential Milk Donors**

Human milk is a gift that lasts 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.

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**About Mothers’ Milk Bank**

A nonprofit program of Rocky Mountain Children's Health Foundation, [Mothers' Milk Bank](http://www.mothersmilk.org) (MMB) collects, processes, tests 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](http://www.hmbana.org).

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
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