Human milk versus formula: A Cochrane Database review

Ten years ago, in 2008, the Cochrane Library originally reviewed evidence on donor human milk versus formula for preemies and concluded formula increased the risk of developing necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC).

This summer the Cochrane Library updated their review and found no change, concluding: **Formula feeding increases the risk of NEC by nearly 50 percent.** The review included several new and thorough studies which have been completed during the last 10 years and found donor human milk has a potent protective effect on the well being of preterm and low-birth weight babies.

In addition, the review showed short-term weight gains in formula-fed babies while in hospital, but their growth was not sustained after leaving the hospital.

Currently, five clinical trials studying more than 1,200 infants are ongoing internationally and the review will be updating these statistics after the trials are completed.

Practicing evidence-based medicine is important for all physicians and medical
providers. This meta-analysis of research shows how important donor human milk can be to fragile infants' lives and to help prevent the suffering and morbidity of necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC).

**Sources:**


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**Prescribe Donor Milk**

Donor human milk is the first choice for all babies anytime mom's own milk is unavailable and 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 and watch a short video.

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**Potential Milk Donors**

Human milk is a gift that lasts a lifetime.

Nationally, we are seeing a growing demand for human milk for babies. We rely on the generosity of our donors and are thankful for the healthcare providers who encourage patients with excess milk to become milk donors to meet this demand. If you have a patient with an established milk supply and more milk than her healthy baby needs, please have her contact us. Those 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 (MMB) collects, processes, tests, analyzes 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

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