

Donor Milk

Why is breast milk so important for my baby?

Mother's own milk is the very best food for your newborn baby. Mother's own milk is specially made by you for your baby. There are special antibodies and proteins, carbohydrates and fats that help support your baby's ability to fight infection.

Your baby's health care providers encourage you to pump your breast within the first 1-2 hours after delivery. Your breast milk is the most important food your baby can receive. Sometimes, mothers have difficulty making the milk that your baby needs. Your health care provider may talk to you about the use of milk called Human Donor Milk.

What is human donor milk?

Donor milk is *human milk* which is heat-treated to make it safer for use. The milk has been donated by moms who had more milk than their baby needed or perhaps lost a baby of their own and made the decision to donate in honor of their baby. Each mom is carefully screened, verbally and medically, before the donated breast milk is accepted.

Why use human donor milk?

Sometimes, because of health or hormonal reasons, mom's milk is late to come in or mom's supply may be low. Donor milk is easier for a baby to digest than formula. Human donor milk as well as mother's own milk have been also shown to help reduce the risk of developing a severe belly (stomach) disorder called *necrotizing enterocolitis*. This illness can cause your baby to become very sick. Your baby's health care provider will talk with you about the use of donor breast milk for your baby if needed.

Is donor milk safe?

All donor mothers are carefully screened. Donor mothers must be healthy and free of medications. They are also asked to complete blood work prior to donating their breast milk. They send their breast milk to the milk bank where it will be put together (pooled) and heat-treated. The milk is tested to make sure there are no germs in it, and then it is frozen. These frozen containers are sent to the NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) and kept frozen until it needs to be used.

Questions?

Ask a member of your baby's health care team if you have more questions. You can also learn more about donor milk through these websites:

- Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBNA) – Visit www.hmbana.org
- Ohio Health Mothers Milk Bank – Visit <https://www.ohiohealth.com/locations/womens-health/mothers-milk-bank/>

9/2023

This information does not replace your provider's medical advice, treatment plan, or education provided by your nurse or other care provider. Be sure to follow your personalized plan of care. Nothing on this sheet is considered medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. If you have questions about this or any other medical information, talk with your care provider. Seek help right away if you need urgent medical attention. If you are outside the hospital, call 911. If you are a patient in the hospital, ask your nurse or other member of your care team for help.



Ask a staff member about interpreters and other language access services and aids, available at no cost to patients and families.
Pregunte a un miembro del personal acerca de los intérpretes y otros servicios y ayuda para el acceso al idioma que están a su disponibilidad sin costo alguno.

