

# Donating Breast Milk



## Healthy Babies UK Depot Donor Milk Bank South West

Honeysuckle House, 4 Barrington Street, Tiverton, Devon, EX16 6PU

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# Background

## **What is the Depot Donor Milk Bank South West?**

Healthy Babies UK have set up a Depot Donor Milk Bank in Tiverton so that South West parents have the same options and access to donor milk as the rest of the country.

HBUK have authorised a partnership to act as a Depot where milk can be stored safely and securely on site to enable NICU Support (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) the Devon Freewheelers and Blood Bike Group to efficiently deliver and collect donor breast milk, something which is currently not feasible to the major hospitals in the South West.

Healthy Babies UK is an established base with a home from home environment where mothers wishing to donate can be welcomed. The house will also be a focal point for the freewheelers/blood bikes to be able to meet and then take donated milk onto Bristol to be pasteurised.

## **Why is there a need for a Depot Donor Milk Bank?**

Donor breastmilk is used for pre-term and neonatal units. Human milk is a complex, living fluid that is more than simply nutrition. It has specific health promoting components that have been proven to enhance infant health that cannot be provided by infant formula. It is considered to be a living fluid due to its ant-bacterial, anti-viral, anti-parasitic factors as well as hormones, enzymes, specific growth factors and immunological properties

HBUK can support Bristol to enable more milk to be donated and more babies to have access to donor milk.

Research has demonstrated that feeding sick or premature babies breast milk reduces the risk of infection and other problems due to its special anti-infective properties; this increases their chance of survival and helps their long-term development.

Unfortunately, maternal breast milk is not always available due to insufficient supply, illness or a mother's geographical separation from her baby.

We understand having a new baby is a busy time but if you can donate, it is very much appreciated, you will be offered support and advice during this period.

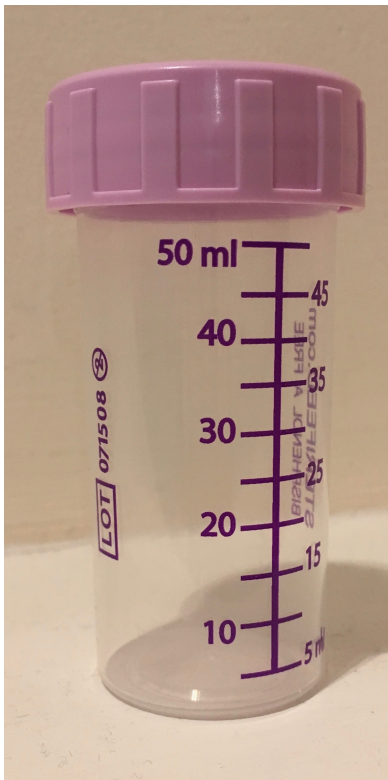
## **Who can donate breast milk?**

- Mothers who have established breastfeeding with their own baby and find they have milk surplus to their baby's requirements.
- To be able to donate there is an expectation that your baby is exclusively breastfed/breast milk fed
- Enrolment is ideally before your baby is four months old
- Mothers who have had an initial surplus (perhaps with a baby on Neonatal Unit themselves) and their supply has now regulated
- You may be wishing to donate your milk for other reasons not mentioned here (please get in touch)

The self-assessment questionnaire provides further information.

## **How much breast milk will I be expected to produce?**

Sick or premature babies benefit from even the smallest quantities of breast milk. Each mother produces different amounts at different times. You will find the amount you express will vary from day to day. Mothers are asked to donate if possible, a minimum of 40 x 50ml bottles which is 2 litres in total. This may be collected over a number of weeks/months or you may find you regularly request further bottles to fill



**Image of a donor milk bottle**

# Can I become a donor?

## Self Assessment Questionnaire

Please read this carefully and answer the following questions. If you have any queries please contact HBUK Depot Milk bank for advice. If you answer YES to any of the following questions, unfortunately you will be unable to donate your breast milk.

QUESTION	YES	NO
Do you currently smoke or use Nicotine Replacement Therapy?		
Do you regularly exceed recommended alcohol levels for breastfeeding mothers (1-2 units, once or twice a week?)		
Do you use or have recently used recreational drugs?		
Have you previously tested positive for HIV 1 or 2, Hepatitis B or C, Human T-lymphotropic virus (HTLV) type I or II or Syphilis?		
Have you ever been advised by a Health Professional that you are at increased risk of CJD (Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease)		

If you answer YES to any of the following questions you will need to talk to the HBUK Depot Milk Bank staff to discuss your individual circumstances because although a mother's milk is ideal for her own baby, extra care needs to be taken with sick or premature babies.

QUESTION	YES	NO
Caffeine – Do you regularly drink more than 3 caffeinated drinks per day (ie, shop bought coffee, cola, sports drink, red bull)		
Do you drink alcohol?		
Do other members of your household smoke heavily?		
Have you had any recent illnesses or infections (in the last year)?		
Do you have any medical conditions?		
Are you taking any medication or undergoing therapy?		
Have you had any recent medical intervention (for example diagnostic radioactive isotopes)?		
Are you exposed to high or sustained levels of environmental or chemical contaminants (eg, some types of factory employees?)		
In the last 12 months have you had: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Body piercing</li> <li>• Tattoos</li> </ul>		
Have you ever had a blood transfusion?		
Are you taking any herbal medicines, remedies or dietary supplements? <u>Please give details to HBUK</u>		
Is your baby exclusively breastfed or breast milk fed?		
Has your baby had any illnesses		

# I can become a donor, what happens next?

## Contact HBUK, Depot Donor Milk Bank South West.

We need to maintain records of donor mothers and donor milk carefully so you will be asked to provide the following information:

- NHS Number
- Personal Details
- Contact Details
- Medical History

Your information is kept confidential at all times and will not be shared with anyone other than Bristol Southmead Hospital without your prior consent. Due to confidentiality, we are unable to disclose which babies you are helping by donating your breast milk.

You will be provided with the following:

- Leaflets; donors' do it safely, medication and donating breast milk, cleaning/storage of equipment, blood test for breastmilk donors
- Sterile bottles, labels and instructions
- Freezer thermometer (if required), and temperature record sheets.

We will contact you to arrange a face to face meeting at HBUK, Honeysuckle House. We will:

- Complete a health questionnaire (the questionnaire may be completed by phone prior to the appointment at HBUK)
- Answer any questions
- Provide you with all the equipment above
- Take a small sample of your blood.
- We would love to meet your baby at this time too.

If you do not have access to a breast pump, please talk to us when arranging your start up appointment and we will discuss this. You can hand express if you are happy to, however, if you find it easier to use a pump then please do so.

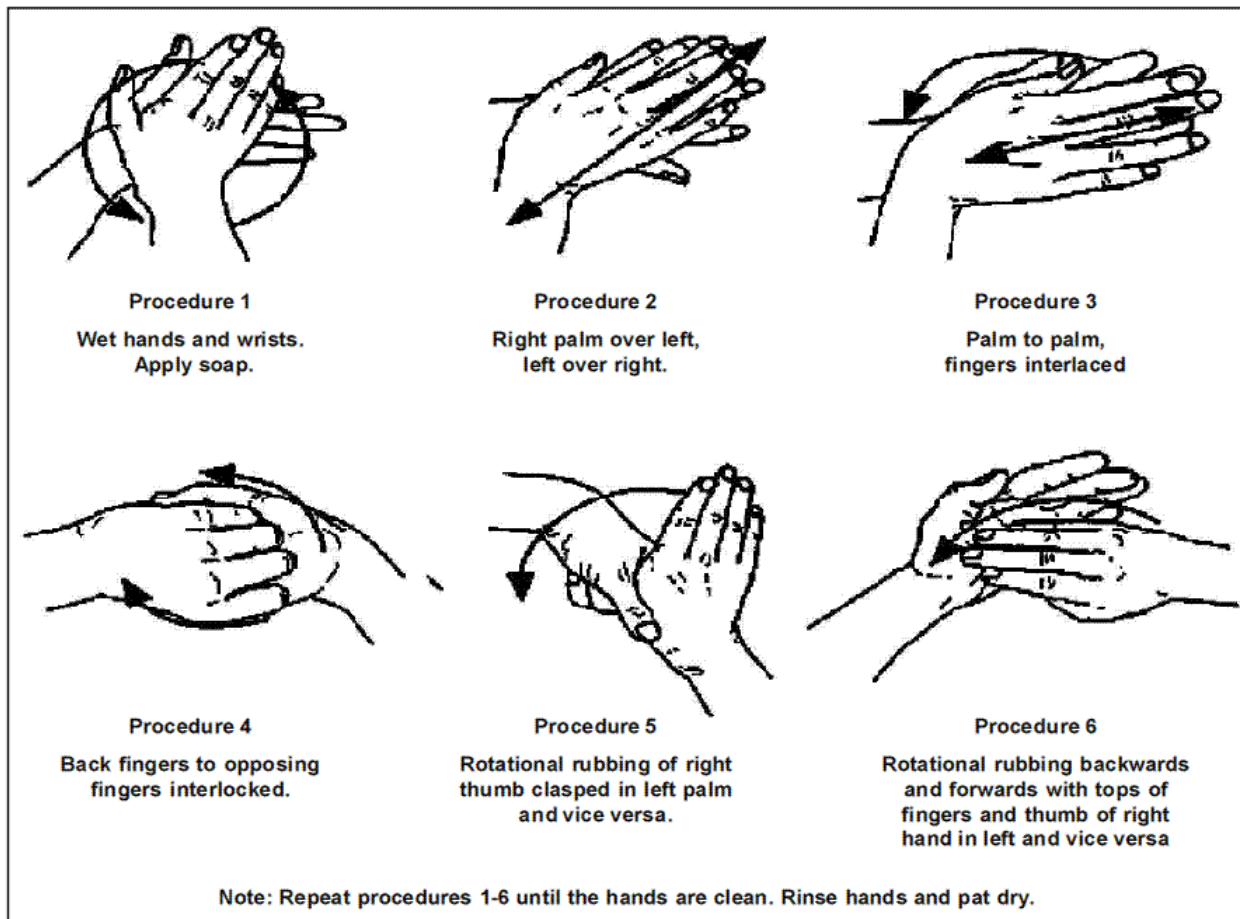
Providing breastmilk for your own baby is priority so if you are exclusively breastfeeding and your baby is under six months the milk you donate to us will be excess.

# How to express and store your breast milk safely

## Cleaning of equipment

Separate all expression kit parts prior to cleaning. Equipment should be cleaned using hot soapy water and rinsed in clear water.

Prior to touching equipment, wash your hands thoroughly. The following picture shows the recommended NHS standard hand washing technique.



## **Personal hygiene**

- Care needs to be taken to ensure your breasts are clean prior to expression
- Wear a well fitted supporting bra which should be changed regularly
- Change breast pads frequently

## **Expressing your breast milk**

Top up breast milk bottles during the day if unable to express a full bottle each time – this will use less bottles and storage space. Bottles must be frozen within 24 hours.

Whilst storing in the fridge, please keep in the main body of the fridge and away from other foods. Any milk collected for donation once frozen should be kept frozen.

## **Labelling your breast milk**

You will be provided with labels for each bottle. After expression, complete one of these with your name, the date you expressed the milk and stick the label to the bottle.

### **Please note:**

In order to avoid contaminating the breast milk when topping up, please follow the recommended hand washing technique as shown on previous page before opening bottles.

## **Storage**

Donor breast milk is ideally accepted in the sterile bottles provided at the initial set up. Empty bottles can be obtained from the depot when milk is delivered.

Your milk donation bottle can be stored in the main part of the fridge (not the door) for up to 24 hours and can be added to. It must be frozen within 24 hours.

Your breast milk can be stored in a domestic freezer and needs to be pasturised within 12 weeks. Therefore, ideally the milk needs to be at the depot within 8 weeks from expression. The temperature of your freezer must be maintained at minus -18 degrees or lower to ensure the milk is stored in the best possible conditions.

If your freezer does not have a digital temperature display, HBUK Depot Milk Bank can provide you with a thermometer. You will be asked to record the temperature of your freezer using “donors’ do it safely” form. This form is then to be returned with the milk. The form needs to have your name and date and be facing out so it’s clearly visible.

## **I have bottles ready for the milk bank, what happens next?**

Contact HBUK Depot Milk Bank to arrange a suitable time for you or your representative to deliver your breast milk. It may be possible for home collection by a volunteer driver on certain dates. This is based on individual circumstances, eg, distance from HBUK Depot Milk Bank and will be discussed with you when you contact HBUK.



When transporting milk to the Depot Milk Bank the following guidelines must be observed:

Transfer your breast milk bottles into a cool bag/box and place a frozen ice block on top (and underneath if possible) to keep them cold during the journey.

A member of staff will meet you at Honeysuckle House, 4 Barrington Street, Tiverton, EX16 6PU.

### **What happens to the milk I have donated?**

HBUK Depot Milk Bank supplies donor milk to Neonatal Units across the South West for sick and premature babies. After the milk is transported to Bristol Hospital for pasteurisation it is then sent directly to the Hospitals across the South West.

### **What support can I expect as a donor?**

The HBUK Depot Milk Bank staff will contact you within 28 days to see how you are progressing. However, please do contact Healthy Babies UK Depot Milk Bank before this if you have any questions or concerns.

If staff are unavailable please leave a message on the answer machine and you will be contacted as soon as possible. Alternatively, if a sooner response is required please message via facebook messenger or email [info@healthy-babies-uk.org](mailto:info@healthy-babies-uk.org)

### **The HBUK milk bank opening hours are:**

Monday(s) 9.30am – 5.00pm

Wednesday(s) 10:00am – 3:00pm

# Frequently asked questions?

## ***Why can I only donate breast milk until my baby is six months old?***

It is thought that breast milk from a mother with a younger baby is more suitable for premature or sick babies. This is being looked at in more detail and researched. Some mothers find that donating works for them for a certain time frame and are then ready to stop. Do discuss this with the team as you might want to wean expressing slowly at 6 months and milk can still be donated during this time.

## ***I am on medication; can I still donate?***

Certain medications may exclude you from donating. Please contact HBUK Depot Milk Bank to discuss individual circumstances.

All drugs which we take have the potential to pass into breastmilk in varying amounts depending on the way the body handles the drug. In general only small quantities reach babies and term well babies can continue to breastfeed in the vast majority of cases.

Babies who will receive donor milk are normally very premature and may well be poorly so it is essential the milk is as free of any drug as possible.

When we meet or over the telephone we will talk through “medications and donating breast milk” providing more information on this subject.

## **Comments from donor mothers**

“As a midwife, I know the importance of being able to provide sick and premature babies with breast milk and now as a mum I’ve been able to put the theory into practice”

“It was difficult to find the time but knowing how much the milk is needed and appreciated made it worth every minute – every drop”

# Healthy Babies UK Contact Details

Healthy Babies UK  
Depot Donor Milk Bank South West  
Honeysuckle House  
4 Barrington Street  
Tiverton  
Devon  
EX16 6PU

Tel: 01884 798069

Email: [info@healthy-babies-uk.org](mailto:info@healthy-babies-uk.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Healthybabiesuk/>

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## The Team

Liz Gunn - Managing Director

Louise Cooke - Director, Trainer and Assessor, Practitioner

Jodie Mortimore - Practitioner