

Using Unscreened, Unpasteurized Human Milk

When might breast milk not be safe?

This handout explains the risks of giving a baby breast milk that does not come from that baby's birth parent.

What do I need to know about breast milk?

Breast milk has many benefits for both the parent and the baby. This is why we support parents in giving their own milk to their infants.

If your baby needs extra breast milk, you can keep them safe by only giving them donor milk from a **certified human milk bank**.

Breast milk that comes from a certified human milk bank goes through a strict quality control process. The milk bank screens donors and pasteurizes the milk. Breast milk that does not go through quality control may expose your baby to health risks.



Make sure any breast milk you buy for your baby comes from a certified human milk bank.

What are the health risks?

If you are thinking about using human milk from a source other than the baby's own birth parent, be aware that there may be health and safety risks for the baby. These risks include:

- Diseases from viruses, bacteria, or germs such as HIV, hepatitis B, or cytomegalovirus (CMV)
- Chemicals, herbs, illegal drugs, or prescription drugs that might be in the milk
- Introducing milk that does not come from human sources; 11% of "human milk" (11 out of 100 products) bought online contains cow's milk products
- Other germs, if the milk is not stored or handled right

Warning from the FDA

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advises **not** to feed your baby breast milk that was bought from individuals or on the internet. This is because:

- Donors of this milk most likely have **not** been screened for infectious diseases or contamination risk.
- The milk has most likely **not** been collected, processed, tested, or stored in a way that reduces risks to your baby.

Where can I buy safe breast milk for my baby?

You can buy donor milk from a certified HMBANA milk bank and have it shipped to your home or to the hospital. One of these certified banks is Northwest Mothers' Milk Bank, 503.469.0955, www.donatemilk.org.

To place your order:

- Call the milk bank to make sure they have donor milk you can buy
- Give them your payment and shipping information

Using Unpasteurized Donor Milk in the Hospital

If you decide that the benefits of human milk outweigh the risks, your doctor or nurse will ask you to sign a *waiver*. This form states that you have received information about feeding your baby donor milk and understand the risks involved.

If you bring frozen milk to the hospital:

- Pack it in an insulated lunch bag with frozen gel packs. Crumple paper towels to fill the extra space.
- Keep it in this container until you are admitted to a patient room, where you will have access to a personal refrigerator. The small freezer within the refrigerator will not keep milk frozen, so only bring enough milk for 1 to 2 days.
- Read about storage guidelines in your "Caring for Yourself and Your New Baby" book.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your healthcare provider or our staff if you have questions or concerns.

Maternal and Infant Care
Clinic: 206.598.4070

How much milk should I bring?

Newborn babies need only small amounts of milk. On the first day after birth, they take less than 1 teaspoon, 8 to 10 times. On the second and third days, they slowly begin to take more, up to an ounce (30 mL) at each feeding.

The most milk you would need for a usual hospital stay after giving birth is about 8 to 16 ounces.