



BC Women's Donor Milk Bank

The Program

For over 30 years, BC Women's Milk Bank has provided pasteurized donor milk to babies in need. These are children whose mothers are unable to meet their infants' nutritional requirements with their own breast milk. Donor milk is provided on medical priority and with a physician's order. Since our milk supply fluctuates over time, we carefully consider every request and meet the needs of as many children as possible. The Milk Bank coordinates the donation of breast milk from carefully screened mothers, pasteurization, packaging, and distribution.

Human milk, with its unique and valuable components, provides many benefits, including being easily digested and providing immune factors to the young child. This reduces the risk of certain infections and illnesses and helps children recover from illness more quickly.

The Recipients

The babies we provide milk to include children who:

- * are born prematurely;
- * have medical conditions such as problems with their kidneys, gastrointestinal tract, cardiac problems;
- * need donor milk following surgery; and
- * cannot tolerate infant formula.

How You Can Help

Breastmilk donors:

We are only able to provide this service with the support of two special groups of people. First the donor mothers who undergo a rigorous screening process and willingly undertake the work of expressing, labeling, and storing their extra breast milk. The donor mothers provide this service through compassion and concern for children they will never see. Each donor is required to provide 100 or more ounces of donor milk. Many provide much larger donations with the largest single donation being 7,000 ounces. We are most appreciative of this special group and are constantly seeking new donors.



Requirements to be a breastmilk donor:

- * Healthy lactating woman;
- * Non smoker;
- * Healthy lifestyle; and
- * Willing to undergo screening (verbal, written, blood tests - similar to blood donor screening).

Financial donors:

The second group of essential donors are those who are willing to make financial donations to the Milk Bank. We could not continue without this group either. Our need for financial support is ongoing since we do not receive government funding. Currently, we charge recipients a processing fee of \$2 per 75 cc of donor milk, which does not cover our costs. Operating a Milk Bank is expensive as the entire process is very labour intensive. In addition, the necessary equipment - pasteurizers, freezers, alarms, locks - need to be replaced in a consistent manner. We would like to establish a program to loan electric pumps to our donors. We would also like to purchase equipment which would allow analysis of each donation in order for us to better meet the needs of our recipients.

Our current “wish list” includes:

- * 20 loaner pumps for our donors;
- * new pasteurizer;
- * replacement freezers;
- * coolers;
- * funding to cover donor milk shipping costs; and
- * a Milkoscan (to analyze milk).

Milk: it Does a Baby Good

Our Milk Bank needs your support. Consider if you or anyone you know is interested in making a donation to BC Women’s Milk Bank. Financial donations of any size are much appreciated and should be made through BC Women’s Foundation and designated to the Milk Bank. The Foundation can be reached at:

BC Women’s Hospital
& Health Centre Foundation
Room 1U64 - 4500 Oak Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6H 3N1

Phone: 604-875-2270
www.womensfoundation.ca

Please share this information with your friends, family, and other contacts who might be interested in donating either financially or by becoming a milk donor.

For further information, please contact the Lactation Service & Milk Bank at 604-875-2282.

