

The Dutch Human Milk Bank is looking for milk donors!



The Dutch Human Milk Bank at the Amsterdam UMC location VUmc collects donated breastmilk to give to babies born prematurely. This allows these vulnerable children to be supplied with breast milk when their own mother is unable to produce (enough) breast milk. This may be because the mother is ill, is taking medication that is harmful for her child, or when the milk production is difficult or not getting started.

What is your milk used for?

Your donated milk will be given to premature babies who have been admitted to one of the intensive care or high care departments for newborns in the Netherlands.

The baby receives donor milk because the baby is in a hospital where donor milk is available on the department. Donor milk will be given as a supplement to own breast milk or as an alternative to formula feeding when there is no own breast milk. The donor milk always comes entirely from the Dutch Human Milk Bank. They will not know from whom the milk originates; the donated milk is provided completely anonymously.

Unfortunately, donor milk has a limited shelf life (even after pasteurisation). Since we want to use all the donor milk we receive as optimal as possible, it is possible that we will use (part of) your milk for scientific research into the improvement of nutrition for newborns.

It is known that breast milk optimally supports growth and development of babies, especially for premature babies in intensive care neonatology. Donor milk is not exactly the same as own breast milk. For safety reasons, donor milk must be pasteurised. Unfortunately, some of the good substances are lost in this process, but research has shown that donor milk has more advantages than formula feeding.

Becoming a milk donor

Given the vulnerability of the babies who receive the donor milk, your milk must meet strict requirements. When you register as a donor, your lifestyle, health and medication use will be discussed during a telephone screening. If no objections are found during this intake, you will be referred to Sanquin Blood Supply. There you will have to answer a number of questions during an examination. In addition, blood will be drawn to look for five diseases that can be transmitted by blood and breast milk. A re-examination takes place every three months at Sanquin Blood Supply, of course only if you wish to do so.

Pumps for the Dutch Breastmilk Bank

First wait until your production of breastmilk is sufficient for your own baby, before you sign up to the milk bank. On the website of the Dutch Human Milk Bank you can see instruction videos that show step by step how to pump in the easiest and most hygienic way. The milk should be pumped and stored in special sterilized storage bottles that you receive from the milk bank. We request you to freeze the milk immediately after pumping. The breastmilk that you pump for the Human Milk Bank must be stored in a separate freezer. The temperature of the freezer should be -18 degrees or colder. You will receive a thermometer to check this (weekly).

In addition to the storage bottles, we will send you labels to be affixed to the bottles.

Transport of the milk

On the website you can see if you live in the area where your milk is collected by a courier. If this is the case, the courier will come to collect your milk. If you do not live in the area where the milk is collected, you can choose to bring the milk. The milk must still be properly frozen upon to arrival. This can be done by using a cooler bag or cool box with frozen cooling elements. You need to make an appointment with the Human Milk Bank so that we can collect your milk in the hospital.

Practical information

Interested in milk donation? More information, such as how to register, our contact details, frequently asked questions and videos can be found on our website www.moedermelkbank.nl.