

Becoming a breast milk donor

Donating your breast milk for
vulnerable babies

What is donor breast milk?

Breast milk provides nutrition and protection for premature and vulnerable babies. Mothers who are unable to breastfeed can use donor breast milk to feed their babies. Those with more breast milk than they need for their own baby can choose to donate this spare milk in the comfort of their own home. This milk is then collected, screened, processed and pasteurised, to make it safe to use.

How would my milk be used?

Your donated breast milk would be used to feed premature or sick babies, whose own mothers are unable to provide them with as much breast milk as they need. We use the donated breast milk within the Evelina London Children's Hospital and may supply other neonatal units in London and Kent when required.

Can I be a breast milk donor?

If you are a healthy breastfeeding mother, who has excess milk for your own baby's needs we would be happy to hear from you.

We require donors to donate at least 2 litres of milk either as a one-off donation or on a regular basis. We also require that your baby is less than 6 months old. This is because most of the breast milk is used for feeding premature babies who have different nutritional needs to older babies.

I have a medical condition or take medication, can I still donate?

As part of the recruitment process, the Milk Bank will require you to complete a health questionnaire. This helps us to make sure that there is no health condition or medication you are taking that will affect the babies that will receive your milk. All your medical history will be treated confidentially and only used to assess your suitability to donate. There are many medical conditions and medications that are not a barrier to donating. Please contact the Milk Bank to discuss this further if you wish.

Is there any situation that will mean I am unable to donate?

We will be unable to accept your milk if:

- you smoke, use any form of nicotine replacement therapy, or are exposed to passive smoking
- you use illegal drugs
- you have a family history of tuberculosis (TB).

What is the process to become a donor?

When you decide you would like to become a breast milk donor, the Milk Bank staff will send you a health questionnaire. This will include questions about your lifestyle, medical history, infections and your baby.

This questionnaire can be sent to you by post or via an email and returned to us at MilkBank@gstt.nhs.uk

Once we receive your health questionnaire back we will arrange an appointment to meet a member of Milk Bank staff to discuss the process of donating and for you to have blood tests taken for:

- HIV
- Hepatitis B and C
- HTLV I and II (Human T-cell Leukaemia Viruses)
- Syphilis.

All donors are required to have these tests before being registered as a donor. We are unable to use the results from your blood tests taken during pregnancy.

Once we receive the results of your blood tests (which takes about a week), we will contact you to pass on the results and confirm that we can register you as a donor.

We can then arrange collection of any frozen milk that has been expressed within the last 3 months. This will be undertaken by our volunteer courier service. We can provide all the bottles that you will require to store your milk for donation.

I would like to donate.

Who do I need to contact?

Thank you for considering becoming a breast milk donor. To get started please e-mail MilkBank@gstt.nhs.uk

A member of Milk Bank staff will then start the process with you.

Useful information

UK Association of Milk Banks

www.UKAMB.org

UNICEF – Baby Friendly

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly>

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about milk donation, please contact the Milk Bank on 020 7188 8846 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm). Out of hours, please contact the Special Care Baby Unit on 020 7188 8846.

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline.

t: 020 7188 3003 10am to 5pm, Mon to Fri

e: letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints)

e: complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

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