



Human breast milk is the best food for human babies.

With your permission, your baby will be fed donor human milk until your own milk production increases, or until your baby reaches the age when their risk factors decrease.

Who can I talk with about using donor milk for my baby?

Your baby’s doctors, nurses, neonatal nurse practitioners, and lactation consultants are happy to talk with you about your questions or concerns.

If your baby is at **UW Montlake**, call:

- NICU: 206.598.4606

If your baby is at **UW Northwest**, call:

- NICU: 206.668.2109
- Childbirth Center: 206.668.1882

To Learn More

Visit these websites to learn more about using donor human milk:

- Human Milk Banking Association of North America: www.hmbana.org
- “Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk,” policy statement by the American Academy of Pediatrics: <https://publications.aap.org/aapnews/news/20528/Updated-AAP-guidance-recommends-longer?searchresult=1>

These organizations strongly recommend a diet of exclusively human milk for infants:

- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American College of Nurse-Midwives
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
- World Health Organization



Donor Human Milk Program

This booklet explains the donor human milk program and why some babies need donor human milk.

The Benefits of Human Milk

Human breast milk is the very best food for human babies. Breast milk has special nutrients that help babies grow healthy and strong. Babies who are fed breast milk have lower risk of infections and some illnesses than babies who are fed formula.



Even when mothers follow all breastfeeding recommendations, they still may not have enough breast milk to feed their babies.

Expressing Your Breast Milk

At the hospital, we will encourage you to express your breast milk. Some of the keys to reaching your highest milk production are to express milk:

- In the first hour after your baby is born
- 8 times a day
- By hand and by using a hospital-quality pump
- While you are looking at pictures of your baby

Holding your baby skin-to-skin (sometimes called kangaroo care) can also help improve your milk supply.

If you do not have enough of your own milk, your baby's care team may talk with you about using donor human milk.

What is donor human milk?

Donor human milk is breast milk donated by mothers who have extra milk. They donate it to accredited non-profit milk banks that follow strict guidelines for handling and processing human milk.

Is donor milk safe?

All mothers who donate milk are screened for diseases like AIDS, hepatitis, and syphilis. They must also not smoke, drink alcohol, or take medicines regularly.

How is the milk processed?

Milk from several donors is mixed together. It is then:

- *Pasteurized* (heated) to kill any germs.
- Tested to make sure it is free of germs.
- Frozen and shipped (while still frozen) overnight to the hospital.
- Stored in a special freezer, used only for donor milk, until the milk is needed.

Are there any risks from using donor milk?

Even though donor milk is carefully screened, there is a very small risk that an infectious germ could be passed to your baby by the donor milk.

Why do we recommend supplementing with donor human milk?

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all infants receive human milk. This is because a human milk diet:

- Reduces rates of asthma, obesity, type 1 diabetes, severe lower respiratory disease, middle ear infections, sudden infant death syndrome, gastrointestinal distress or infections, and, in the premature infant, necrotizing enterocolitis.
- Contains growth factors and hormones that help a baby's development. Formula does not give these benefits.



Human milk contains many things that help a baby's health and development.

When is donor milk used?

Even when mothers do everything right, they may not be able to collect enough breast milk to feed their babies. This is often true in the first few days after birth.

If your baby is eligible for donor milk, your baby's care team will talk with you about it and answer your questions.