



TEN STEP TUESDAY

Fun Facts about Donor Human Milk

Adapted from info from the Austin Mother's Milk Bank (a HMBANA Milk Bank)

It's Ten Step Tuesday!

Is Donor Human Milk Safe?

Yes. Accredited milk banks follow strict donor screening, milk processing and dispensing standards established by the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (www.hmbana.org) to ensure the safety of donor human milk. These standards have been established with the advisement of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the US Food and Drug Administration, and the blood and tissue industries. Potential milk donors provide complete medical and lifestyle histories, and undergo blood tests for HIV, HTLV, syphilis, and hepatitis B and C, similar to the screening process used at blood banks. Donated milk is then tested for bacteria and nutritional composition, and pasteurized to kill any bacteria and viruses. Before dispensing, bacteriological testing is repeated to verify that all bacteria are destroyed.

How is DHM Processed?

Frozen donated milk is thawed, nutritionally analyzed, cultured for bacteria, pooled for nutrient standardization, and poured into bottles, then pasteurized at 62.5 C in a shaking water bath or automatic pasteurizer. Pasteurized milk is quick-cooled, then frozen at -20°C. Microbiological cultures are obtained by an independent laboratory from individual donors' deposits prior to pasteurization and pooling, and from each batch of milk after pasteurization. This is done to verify that no heat-resistant pathogens are present before pasteurization, and that there is zero growth of bacteria after the heating process.

Is Milk Banking Cost Effective?

Yes! Research shows that necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC), a primary cause of death and illness for preemies when human milk feedings are unavailable, will increase the medical costs for one baby between \$128,000 and \$238,000. In addition, reductions in other complications such as retinopathy of prematurity through the use of donor human milk instead of formula means that the baby goes home sooner with fewer medical issues - and stays healthier long term.

Are Milk Donors Paid?

No. Milk donors are volunteers who donate to help save fragile babies.

Doesn't Pasteurization Kill Off All the Valuable Properties of Human Milk?

No! Donor milk is pasteurized to destroy bacteria and viruses that are present in milk. A small amount of growth enzymes and immunological components are decreased by pasteurization, but pasteurized milk retains the majority of its most beneficial qualities. Pasteurized donor milk still has many special properties that cannot be duplicated by commercial milk formulas.

Did You Know...?

In special circumstances, exclusively breastfeeding babies can be sent home with a small amount of DHM when supplementation is medically indicated and it can serve as a "bridge" until the onset of mature milk production. Please talk to a lactation consultant if you feel this might be a good option for your patients.

For more information contact

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