

# How to Handle Banked Human Milk *in the Home*



Mothers' Milk Bank



## READING THE LABEL

**Batch Number** | You may receive milk from more than one batch with different expiration dates.

**Expiration Date** | Use milk prior to this date.



## STORAGE

**Store milk in the freezer** (not in the door) until ready to use. Contact MMB if milk is received thawed or any bottles are broken.

## THAWING MILK



### PREFERRED METHOD

The best way to thaw is in the refrigerator, though it takes longer. Place the milk you plan to use in one day in the refrigerator. **It will take 12-24 hours to thaw.**



### QUICK METHODS

Hold the bottle under cool, running tap water, gradually increasing the temperature to skin temperature.

OR

1. Place milk in a clean bowl of warm water, keeping water level below the bottle lid. As the water cools, replace with warm water.
2. Swirl the bottle gently as the milk thaws.
3. Thaw just long enough to be pourable, but still cold.

## FEEDING PREP

1. Gently swirl the milk to mix the layers.
2. Pour estimated amount needed into a clean feeding container. Start with 1-2 ounces if you are unsure how much.
3. Recap and place remaining milk in refrigerator.

**Optional:** Warm the bottle to body temperature as described above, either under running water or in a dish.



Milk must be used within 48 hours of thawing.



**Never** use a microwave to thaw or warm human milk.

Thawed, warm milk should be discarded if it has been at room temperature for more than one hour. Milk not finished at one feeding may be put back in the refrigerator promptly after the feeding and used for the next feeding only. Never add this milk to a “new” bottle of thawed milk. Any remainder should be discarded if not used at the next feeding.

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Upon receipt of your milk please check to verify that it is frozen and that no containers are broken. Always contact Mothers' Milk Bank immediately if there is a problem.

Place the milk in a freezer, toward the back or bottom, where it will stay as cold as possible. Do not store milk in the door shelf. An expiration date is labeled on each bottle. Use the milk with the earliest dates first. Important: note the date and use prior to expiration. Each order of milk may have several different batches with different expiration dates.

## DEFROSTING/THAWING MILK

### *In the refrigerator over several hours:*

This slow method (it may take 24 hours to thaw) is recommended because the milk remains cold during the thawing. Place the amount of milk estimated for daily consumption into the refrigerator to thaw. Make note of the date/time the milk has thawed. Once defrosted (with no ice chunks left), milk must be used within 48 hours or discarded.

### *For quick defrosting:*

Use this method when a feeding is needed soon. Hold the bottle(s) under cool, running tap water, gradually increasing the water temperature to skin temperature. Or, place the bottle(s) in a clean container of warm water, keeping water level below lower edge of bottle lid. As water cools, replace it with more warm water. Gently swirl the bottle(s) occasionally. Thaw long enough for milk to be poured, but still cold.

## WHEN READY TO FEED THE BABY

Gently swirl the bottle of cold milk to mix the layers. Pour the estimated amount needed into a clean feeding container. Cap the bottle containing any remaining cold milk and put it back into the refrigerator immediately.

## WARMING THE MILK

Breastfed babies' milk is naturally provided at body temperature. However, many babies will accept cold milk by bottle. If you decide to warm the milk, choose one of the following two methods:

- Place the feeding bottle in a clean bowl of warm water, keeping the neck of the bottle above the water level, or
- Hold the bottle under warm running tap water until milk is heated to the desired temperature. Gently swirl the bottle to mix the milk layers before feeding.

## NEVER USE THE MICROWAVE TO DEFROST OR WARM MILK

Components in the milk are changed by microwaves, and microwaves do not heat evenly, causing 'hotspots' in the bottle of milk. This can be unsafe for the baby. Never heat human milk warmer than skin temperature.

Thawed, warm milk should be discarded if it has been at room temperature for more than one hour. Milk not finished at one feeding may be put back in the refrigerator promptly after the feeding and used for the next feeding only. Never add this milk to a "new" bottle of thawed milk. Any remainder should be discarded if not used at the next feeding.

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## OUTPATIENT RECIPIENT INFORMATION

Mothers' Milk Bank, a program of Rocky Mountain Children's Health Foundation, along with hospitals all over the country, support the highest standard of care in infant feeding: your milk for your baby. Sometimes a supplement is needed – perhaps once, perhaps longer. If a supplement to your milk is necessary, you have access to the “First Choice,” which is donor human milk from Mothers' Milk Bank (MMB), a member of the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA). We hope the following information will answer any questions you may have about this essential nutrition and therapy.

## WHY BANKED HUMAN MILK?

Your milk is the normal and very best food for your baby. Human milk, both yours and banked milk, contains numerous essential health factors not found in any manufactured formula product. It contains the perfect components for the development of your baby's brain and nervous system. There are antibodies to fight infection, and specific growth hormones for your baby's organs, bones, muscles and other tissues. It has properties that have been shown to have positive health effects even years later in life. Human milk also protects against allergies and many illnesses. Many professional, medical and international health organizations (such as the American Academy of Pediatrics) list banked human milk as the “First Choice” to feed a baby if mom's own milk is not sufficient. Banked human milk is safe and healthy.

## AVAILABILITY OF MILK

The goal of Mothers' Milk Bank is to provide milk for every baby who needs it. For you as parents, we realize that your own baby's needs are of prime importance. However, because the banked milk supply is entirely dependent on volunteer donors, it cannot be guaranteed that there will always be sufficient milk to meet all requests, or for extended usage. Should there be more requests for milk than there is supply, those babies having the most critical medical need will be provided with the milk that is available. These decisions are made by the Milk Bank Manager. It is rare for this situation to occur.

## RECEIVING MILK

Banked milk must be prescribed by a physician or other healthcare provider with prescriptive privileges. A written prescription must be faxed to Mothers' Milk Bank or given to the recipient to bring with them. **Then a telephone order must be placed prior to picking up the milk.** When your baby is receiving banked milk, it is mandatory that s/he be under a physician's care. Regular consultations must be made with the baby's physician to evaluate any ongoing need for banked milk, with involvement of Milk Bank staff.

## SCREENING OF MILK BANK DONORS

Milk Bank donors are healthy, conscientious people who care about others, particularly babies. They are nursing their own babies, have an abundant milk supply, and donate their surplus milk to the Milk Bank. All donors receive detailed instructions on hygienic collection, handling, and storage of their milk. Milk donors are screened even more carefully than blood donors. They each undergo a detailed medical and lactation history screening by Milk Bank personnel to ensure they meet the donor requirements established by the MMB Advisory Council and the Human Milk Banking Association of North America. They must be non-smokers, take no medications, and she and her family must be well during the time she donates. Donor requirements restrict alcohol use and limit caffeine consumption. All milk donors have the same blood tests done that are done for blood donors: HIV I/II, HTLV I and II, syphilis, and Hepatitis B and C. Written authorization to be a donor is obtained from both the mother's and baby's health care providers.

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## SAFETY AND QUALITY OF DONOR HUMAN MILK FROM MOTHERS' MILK BANK

The highest level of safety practices is used in human milk banking. All donor human milk from MMB has been screened and processed in accordance with the most current international milk banking standards, and recommendations by the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control in our ISO7 certified clean laboratory. All milk is screened and tested for the major drugs of abuse before dispensation. Donor milk from MMB is safe, sterile and excellent infant nutrition.

Donor human milk from MMB has been pasteurized (gently heated) to eliminate any bacteria or other organisms that may have been present in the milk. A high level of nutrients is maintained during this process, such as the essential fats necessary for optimal brain growth. High levels of immune components are also preserved. Fat, protein, carbohydrates and most other components remain unchanged. None of these healthy, specialized components are found in any manufactured formula products. Donor human milk is gentle on your baby's digestive system, and the nutrients are readily digested and absorbed.

## ORDERING AND TRANSPORTATION

- › The recipient family will need to call and place each milk order.
- › For pickup from MMB, coolers and adequate ice or frozen packs are required to keep the milk frozen during transit.
- › Courier service may be arranged for local deliveries. There is a \$15 flat handling fee associated with every courier, shipping fees are determined by the courier company. Shipping and handling fees are to be paid by the recipient parent/guardian.
- › Milk can be shipped to rural Colorado or out of state using FedEx overnight Monday – Thursday. There is a \$15 handling fee per box, shipping fees are determined by FedEx. All fees are the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian. Same-day shipping for next-day delivery cannot be guaranteed if ordered after 1pm MST.
- › ***Once milk has left MMB it cannot be returned, and refunds are not possible.***

## PAYMENT

Mothers' Milk Bank is a not-for-profit organization and does not charge for donor human milk, though there is a tissue processing fee. This processing fee insures safety of the milk and screening of all donors. This fee is \$4.50 per ounce for standard milk. Please call for fees on specialty milk such as preterm milk. ***The recipient's family or legal guardian is responsible for the entire amount of the bill for processing fees and any transportation fees.*** Accepted payment methods include: Visa, MasterCard, American Express, check, or exact cash.

*Fees subject to change without notice. Updated August 2021.*

*call us at 303.869.1888 | email us at [mothersmilk@rmchildren.org](mailto:mothersmilk@rmchildren.org) | visit us at [rmchildren.org](http://rmchildren.org)*