

Oxford Human Milk Bank Registration Process

If you are thinking of donating to the Milk Bank, here is an outline of how the process works for registration.

The Oxford Milk Bank is currently accepting donors whose babies are under six months of age at the time of registration; this is because our babies are very sick and premature, therefore breast milk from mothers with younger babies is more suitable for their specific nutritional needs. If your baby is over six months of age, unfortunately we are **unable** to accept you as a new donor.

In order to register you as a donor there are certain criteria to which you must adhere. Please check the donor form to see if you are eligible.

- Milk Banks cannot accept milk from mothers who smoke or use illegal drugs.
- Milk Banks cannot accept milk from mothers who drink more than 1-2 units of alcohol once or twice a week, or excessive amounts of caffeine per day.
- We will require you to visit your GP/nurse to be screened for infections that may be passed on through breast milk. It may also be possible to visit us here for your bloods to be taken through appointment.
- You cannot donate breast milk if you have been advised by a healthcare professional that you are at increased risk of vCJD (Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease). In addition, you may not be able to donate if you have received a blood transfusion or certain other blood based products although the time limits for this can vary between Milk Banks, and which types of tests are used for blood checks. The time scale is likely to be if this happened within the past 4-6 months.
- Finally, please contact us if you are currently taking any medication. Sometimes, drugs which are perfectly safe for you to take when breastfeeding your own baby can pass sufficiently into your milk to be unsafe for premature babies.

By registering as a donor you are not committing yourself to donating any particular amount, or for any length of time. Nor do you have to tell us when you decide to stop donating; you can just stop donating.

If you live in Oxford

- 1) The manager can usually obtain a copy of your blood results from the Oxford lab, after your bloods have been taken. Please let her know when you have them done so she can look out for the results. If not she will get in touch with your GP.
- 2) We now have a home collection service in Oxford and surrounding areas. If you would like your milk collected from your home, let us / her know and she will arrange this.
- 3) Alternatively, if you would prefer not to have to wait in for collections, and you or your friends / relations have occasion to come into Headington from time to time, your milk can be dropped off at the JR Women's Centre 24/7. If they come by car, they can park for 20 minutes without paying – in certain slots – and it won't take that long. The Milk Bank is on Level 2 of the Women's Centre

(Maternity). You need to walk in, past reception and the vending machines, and turn right just before the double doors to the lifts.

Go through the doors marked 'Special Care Nursery and Main Hospital' and follow the corridor round to the left; at the locked double doors ring the bell and someone will answer and let you in. Explain that you have a milk donation for the Milk Bank and the member of staff will be able to ensure your milk arrives safely in the designed freezers.

The record of the milk's delivery will be signed in to the folder on the shelf and fresh bottles can also be collected at the same time.

At OUH we do ask you to sterilise your equipment when it has been washed.

The most important factor in maintaining low bacterial counts in expressed milk is **washing** – both **hands** and **equipment after use**, and **hands before** starting to express. If this is done properly, sterilising isn't necessary; however, if it is not done properly, milk will still **fail** screening, in spite of equipment sterilisation.

If you do not live in Oxfordshire

- 1) We would require you to visit your GP/nurse to have the relevant blood tests, and require a copy of the registration form. Once we receive this we can request your blood results from the relevant lab or your GP. Some GP's are unhappy to pay the costs of the tests. If this is the case, in your starter kit I can send out a blood testing kit. If your GP practice would just kindly agree to take the sample to coincide with a milk collection, I can arrange for the riders to collect your sample and milk at the same time. Therefore all the costs associated with having the tests come to the milk bank your practice is just kindly taking your sample.
- 2) Once you are registered, we will send you a registration pack which contains sterile bottles etc. and arrange for a courier when you tell us you are ready for your first collection.
- 3) When the courier, Service by Emergency Rider Volunteers (SERV OBN or SEVERNFREEWHEELERS), has been to you once, and therefore knows you are a registered donor, you can contact the charity directly via the dedicated donor milk email address and they will dispatch a rider so you don't have to go through the manager each time.

Frequently asked questions

When can I start expressing milk?

You should establish breastfeeding with your own baby first before donating; we can only register mothers with babies less than six months of age. If you are unsure about expressing milk, you can talk to your midwife, health visitor or a Milk Bank staff member who will advise you.

When should I be expressing?

When you express is up to you, however, we suggest you vary the times of milk expressing throughout 24 hours so the milk has a good nutrient balance, and express regularly to ensure good milk supply.

If I donate, will I have enough milk for my own baby?

We recommend establishing your own baby's feeding before donating; your body will make milk on a supply and demand basis and adjust to amount needed. For most of our mums, the law of supply and demand ensures they still produce plenty of milk for their own baby; however if you are worried about giving your baby enough milk, you can express an hour or so after feeding.

What if I get ill?

Please contact the Milk Bank on **01865 225507** if you are feeling ill or someone in your family is ill, and we will tell you whether you should stop donating until the illness has passed.

What if I need to take medication?

Please check with the Milk Bank about any medication you are taking, both prescription and over the counter, to ensure it is OK for you to donate whilst taking them.

Can I drink alcohol while donating?

We accept milk from donors consuming alcohol occasionally; this means 1-2 units per week (one unit is one small glass of wine, one beer or one measure of spirits). Anything more than this we can't accept, as research shows alcohol passes into the milk; you should also be aware of this when feeding your own baby.

Is the milk tested?

A pre and post sample is taken from each batch of milk to ensure that no undesirable bacterium has contaminated it during expression and handling. They are then sent off to the laboratory here at the hospital.

Does the Milk Bank have a confidentiality policy?

All information about donors and their babies remains confidential; babies who receive donor breast milk are also anonymous. After donated breast milk is decanted into new sterile bottles they are given a code in order to keep the mothers' information anonymous.

What if I am going away?

You can express whilst you are away from home as this will help to maintain your milk supply; however, this is up to you. You can stop expressing while you are away and resume when you return home.

Please keep in mind, if you are expressing whilst away, that the guidelines for storing and transporting the milk remains the same as if you were expressing from home.