



Whāngai Ora Milk Bank Donor Information

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Whāngai Ora Milk Bank (WOMB) is a human milk bank in Palmerston North, devoted to saving the lives and improving the health of babies without access to their own mothers' milk.

Thanks to donations of breast milk from breastfeeding mothers, high risk babies are provided with pasteurised, donor breast milk.

As a breastfeeding mother you are providing your own baby with the superior nutritional and immune protective qualities of breast milk, and the optimum health, growth and development that goes with that.

By donating your surplus breast milk, you will do the same for the vulnerable recipient babies, and this may be a gift that even their own mothers cannot give them – the breast milk they need to survive and thrive. Can you find a little time to do this?

Frequently Asked Questions

Will I have enough milk to donate?

- By expressing extra milk for another baby, you will not deprive your baby in any way – in fact, expressing will increase your milk supply.
- Just 50ml can feed a baby of under 1kg for 24 hours.
- Please do not put your own baby on to formula in order to donate milk – your baby comes first and needs your milk!

Will my donated milk be sold?

- The milk itself is not sold, and currently funding covers all the costs to recipients. If funding is not renewed, a processing fee may in future be charged to partially cover the cost of collecting, screening, pasteurising and dispensing the donor milk.

How do I become a donor?

- Contact us and we will ask you to fill in a Screening Form and a Consent form.
- We also require you to have a blood test at no cost to you. We ask you to store at least a litre of breast milk before going for the test, to make sure that expressing milk is going to fit into your lifestyle.
- Long-term donors will be requested to repeat the HIV test after 6 months.
- For each delivery, you will be asked to sign a health declaration for the period of donation, covering any possible exposure to Covid-19, other infections for you or your baby, new vaccinations for you, or new medications.

What special precautions are needed for expressing donor milk?

- Pump in a clean space without animals around.
- Always wash your hands well before expressing.
- Hand expressing is acceptable.
- If using a pump, wash and sterilise the parts before use.
- Second-hand or hired breast pumps are not recommended with the exception of the closed system multi-user pumps if each user has her own attachments unused by others. Open system pumps may grow fungus inside the motor.

How do I clean and sterilise my pump?

- After pumping, dis-assemble the pump and rinse off milk from the parts in **cool** water.
- Then wash all pump parts separately in hot soapy water.
- Rinse and sterilise as stipulated by the pump manufacturer.
- Avoid sterilising solutions where possible. Boiling or steaming pump parts is preferable and more effective.
- Leave the pump parts upside down on a clean tea towel to dry thoroughly, to avoid the growth of mould.

What containers can I use?

- Sterile glass or plastic BPA-free jars with screw top lids are ideal. We will accept plastic milk storage bags.
- Please do not use ice cube trays.
- If you donate a stash of milk in your own jars, we will do our best to return these to you, but there are no guarantees that this will always be possible.
- Containers need not be full but a new container must be used each time you express.
- Please leave plenty of head space in the container for expansion when freezing.

How do I sterilise the containers?

- Containers that you receive from our depots are sterile.
- Should you need to sterilise your own containers:
 - wash the jars & lids in hot soapy water & rinse well.
 - Submerge in a pot of water and boil for 10 minutes.
 - Dry upside down on a clean kitchen towel.
 - Sterilising solutions are not recommended.
 - Do not touch the inside of the containers and lids after sterilising.

How do I store breastmilk?

- Please label the jars with your name or donor number (if known) and the date. Masking tape is ideal for labelling on jars, or a Sharpie pen on bags.
- Cool the milk in the fridge and freeze within 24 hours of expressing, with the jar upright if possible. If using bags, squeeze out excess air before sealing, store flat until frozen, so that the bags take up less room and can be packed carefully for transport.
- Milk needs to be kept separate from other items in the freezer to prevent contamination – perhaps in a tray or clean plastic bag.
- If you are ill or start taking new medications, please do not store that milk for donating, though it will be fine for your own healthy baby. We suggest putting a mark on the jar or bag before freezing to remind yourself not to donate that particular milk.

How do I get my milk to the milk bank?

- Transport your donor milk to the Milk Bank in a bag inside a chilly bin with ice bricks on top of the milk (cold air sinks). Milk must always remain frozen.
- Make sure that the Milk Bank staff are expecting you, so that the milk can be put straight into the freezer.
- Please contact Whāngai Ora Milk Bank staff for alternative arrangements if you cannot deliver.
- For each delivery, you will be asked to sign a health declaration for the period of donation, covering any possible exposure to Covid-19, other infections for you or your baby, new vaccinations for you, or new medications.