

Patient information Leaflet

Pasteurised Donor Breast Milk

August 2018

Breastmilk offers protection

A mother's breastmilk is the best food for her baby. It is specially designed, containing all the nutrients needed, full of antibodies, hormones, enzymes and other protective factors for baby's growth and development. Breastmilk has factors to protect and develop the gut, it is easily digested and destroys harmful bacteria. Artificial formula milk, on the other hand, does not offer any protection and is difficult to digest.

Premature babies are particularly vulnerable and if the mother cannot produce any or enough breastmilk, human donor milk is often preferred to formula milk. Premature babies are at increased risk of Necrotizing Enterocolitis (NEC), a serious condition affecting the bowel that can make a pre term baby very unwell and can be fatal. The bowel is more fragile and under developed compared to that of a term baby and breastmilk is better tolerated than formula. Breastmilk also offers protection against other complications such as retinopathy of prematurity and can promote development of the brain and cardiac system.

What is donor breastmilk?

New mothers in good health can choose to donate their breastmilk to a milk bank. It can then be used by the hospital that requests it.

Milk banks need donors to meet specific health and lifestyle requirements before accepting donor milk. It is then screened and treated for viruses and infections such as:

HIV

Hepatitis B and C

HTLV I and II (Human T-lymphotropic virus)

Syphilis

NICE (2010) gives guidance on how human donor milk is handled, processed and stored to reduce the risk of bacteria, disease or drugs (see link below).

Which babies will benefit most from donor breastmilk?

Parents need to give consent for their baby to receive donor milk. It is usually offered to premature babies under 32 weeks, babies who have NEC or who have had surgery on their intestines or babies with major heart abnormalities.

Although it is frozen, thawed and heat treated, donor milk still contains many of the factors to help protect premature and sick babies from infection.

The pasteurisation process changes the composition of donor milk and can reduce the fat content which in turn can reduce the fat soluble vitamins in the milk. Donor breastmilk may need to be fortified with vitamins.

References

Birch J. (2017) Enteral Nutrition in Preterm/ low birth weight infants Tameside Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

NICE (2010) Donor milkbanks:service operation
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg93/chapter/1-guidance [accessed 31/5/18]

Shenker N. Donor human milk: supporting babies' health and development
www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/donor-human-milk-supporting-health-development/ [accessed 31/5/18]

United Kingdom Association for Milk Banking Every Drop Counts www.ukamb.org [accessed 31/5/18]

If you have any questions you want to ask, you can use this space below to remind you

If you have a visual impairment this leaflet can be made available in bigger print or on audiotape. If you require either of these options please contact the Patient Information Centre on 0161 922 5332

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য পড়তে বা বুঝতে না পারেন, তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে এথনিক হেল্পথ টিমের সাথে টেলিফোনে যোগাযোগ করুন 0161 331 5149/5150 এই নাম্বারে, তখন তারা আপনাকে সাহায্য করতে পারবে।

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