

## Quotes from donors

"I love being able to help by donating my milk to those who are in need and the Hearts Milk Bank are so helpful with the process. They do a fantastic job!"

"Just sent off my first batch of milk. Easy service and super friendly staff make it so easy to donate."

"An amazing milk bank who have helped me donate all my unused milk."



### Hearts Milk Bank is the bank with a difference

Providing screened donor milk to babies in hospital and at home, when breastfeeding is impossible or taking time to establish.

 **01582 314130 / 01582 314131**      **heartsmilkbank**   
 **Out of hours: 07732 019040**      **@heartsmilkbank**   
 **info@heartsmilkbank.org**      **www.heartsmilkbank.org** 

Rothamsted Institute, Hertfordshire AL5 2JQ

Hearts Milk Bank is part of the Human Milk Foundation, Charities Commission number 1172522



**hmb**  
HEARTS MILK BANK

## Donating your milk to the Hearts Milk Bank

The Hearts Milk Bank, based at the Rothamsted Institute in Hertfordshire, just north of London, recruits and screens mothers wishing to donate some of their surplus breastmilk. The HMB provides safe and specially heat-treated donated human milk to hospitals.

Donor milk from the Hearts Milk Bank is fed to babies whose own mothers can't provide enough of their own milk. The babies have usually been born early or with serious health conditions

The Hearts Milk Bank also aims to support ethically funded research into the impact of breastfeeding on the health of mothers and babies, and understand the complexity of human milk.

[www.heartsmilkbank.org](http://www.heartsmilkbank.org)

## How to become a breastmilk donor?

When you first contact the Hearts Milk Bank you will be asked a few simple questions:

- **Where do you live?**

If you live closer to an alternative milk bank we will provide their contact details and suggest you contact them first. If they are not able to recruit you or if you prefer to donate to the Hearts Milk Bank we will continue the recruitment process.

- **Do you smoke or use nicotine products?**

If you smoke or use any nicotine replacement products you will not be able to donate your breastmilk. Very importantly you will be advised to continue to breast feed your own infant but milk banks provide breastmilk to very tiny and very sick babies and so require donor milk that is completely free of nicotine (as well as all other drugs although donors can still drink small amounts of alcohol if they wish)

- **Do you take any routine medication?**

Most medications are safe for mothers to take and continue to breastfeed their own infants – any very small risks are generally outweighed by the disadvantages to the baby of not being breastfed. However milk banks are only able to accept a few medications as the babies who receive donor milk often have immature organs and may be taking medications that could interact with any taken by the donor.

- **Have you had a recent blood transfusion?**

A recent blood transfusion won't stop you from being able to donate but it may delay your full recruitment.

If it seems that you'll be able to donate to the Hearts Milk Bank we'll email you a detailed health questionnaire and a consent form to complete and return.

The next step will be to have screening blood tests for HIV, hepatitis B and C, HTLV and syphilis. For this we will send you a testing kit to take to your GP or local blood testing clinic. We'll also provide you with sterile containers to store your milk in, helpful instructions to follow to ensure your milk is safe to use and a thermometer for the required daily freezer temperature checks.

If you aren't able to become a milk donor you may still be able to support research at the Hearts Milk Bank. Please email us to find out more.

[www.heartsmilkbank.org](http://www.heartsmilkbank.org)

## Milk bank experiences

Jo found out about milk donation when her Health Visitor commented on how well her baby was growing on just her breastmilk and how mums like her can express once a day and freeze the milk for a milk bank.

Linda's baby was 9 months old but still fully breastfeeding (plus complementary foods) when she found out about milk donation. Linda's local milk bank only recruit mothers whose babies are less than 6 months old so they put her in touch with the Hearts Milk Bank. Because the HMB provides donor milk to hospitals caring for older babies as well as newborns, Linda was able to go through the recruitment process. She started to express her milk once a day and after a few weeks trial during which she found she had plenty of milk to donate she signed up to becoming a milk donor.

When Natalie's premature baby Harry went home from hospital after spending 3 months on the neonatal unit, she was very happy to be able to donate some of the milk she had stored for Harry but which he didn't need now he was completely breastfeeding. Natalie was encouraged to wait for a couple of weeks whilst Harry fully established breastfeeding before returning her completed questionnaire and consent form agreeing to the milk bank starting to test and heat treat the milk

Jane's baby, Tom, who was born with a heart problem, sadly died after a few days. Jane had been expressing her milk for Tom and her milk supply had just come in. Hospital staff offered to show Jane how to stop her milk but she had donated milk with her first baby and decided to wait and see if she could donate again. She felt it would be a gift to other families from both herself and Tom. The milk bank staff advised Jane that she didn't need to decide immediately and that she could see how she felt in a few days or weeks time but also explained that to be able to keep her milk supply flowing she would need to express frequently, at least to begin with. Jane followed this advice and after 2 weeks arranged with the milk bank to get her blood taken. She went on to donate for over 3 months and felt it was very helpful as part of her grieving for Tom to share her milk and to be able to decide to stop lactating in her own time