



As we enter the colder months, we are sharing guidance with all milk donors as sometimes lifestyles can change during seasonal holidays. We are so grateful for every donation you send, as demand for donor milk often increases over the winter months. Your freezer space may also be at a premium at this time of year, so you may be thinking about sending us a donation to make space. We hope that this advice will help to answer any questions you may have over the coming months.

Donation criteria

To donate your milk, we ask that you do not smoke or vape, or live in a household where someone smokes or vapes indoors. Donors should not consume more than 2 units of alcohol, 2 times a week. If you plan to drink more alcohol than this over the festive period and wish to take a break from donating until the new year, please let us know.

You

At this time of year, family gatherings are more commonplace. With the rush to get everything ready, buy presents and prepare for the family to visit, you may not be breastfeeding as much as you normally would. Additionally, at gatherings, family members may be eager to hold your baby. During these times, feeding less frequently may reduce your milk supply, or unexpected long intervals between feeds may result in you feeling overly full, sore and uncomfortable. It is best to avoid this as you could develop a blocked duct which, if not rectified, could lead to a breast infection - mastitis.

You can read more about mastitis and management here:

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/BfN-Mastitis-Leaflet-December-22.pdf>

You can find some useful tips and guidance about breastfeeding during celebrations here:

<https://www.laleche.org.uk/holidays-celebrations-and-breastfeeding/Illness>

Cold and flu season is approaching. If you develop a cough, cold or covid, you can still donate your milk to us as long as you feel well enough to do so. If you develop a high temperature (above 38°C), we ask that you wait for at least 48 hours from when your temperature normalises before you express to donate. If you have tested positive for Covid and you are ready for a collection, please let us know so we can delay collection of your milk for 5 days after your positive test.

Please note, it is almost always safe to breastfeed your baby if you have a raised temperature, or are unwell. Your baby will be exposed to the same viruses as you, and your breast milk will contain antibodies to help protect them. If you have been advised to stop breastfeeding by a healthcare professional, and have any questions, you can contact our lactation specialist for advice - contact details can be found at the end of this leaflet.

It is generally safe to continue to donate if your baby is unwell. You may find that an unwell baby may want to feed more, or you may not be able to find the time to express whilst caring for an ill child. If you are likely to stop donating for more than a few days, please let us know. If you suspect your child has an infectious illness e.g. measles please contact us so we can offer you tailored advice.

Medication

If you are prescribed any new medications or creams, please check with the milk bank before you donate your milk. Some medications that are safe to take whilst breastfeeding are not compatible with donating. This is because the criteria for milk donation is different. We can advise you on this. You are not able to donate if you are prescribed antibiotics, please wait at least 48 hours after you have completed your medication before you express to donate. You should still express to avoid developing a blocked duct or mastitis, and to avoid a drop in your milk supply.

Thank you for donating your milk to help sick and tiny babies and for your cooperation with the above guidance. Please contact us on info@heartsmilkbank.org if you have any queries.

Happy Holidays from the Hearts Milk Bank Team!