

What to do with breast milk you can't donate

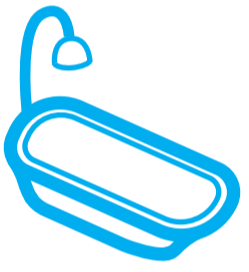
We are often contacted by mums who would like to donate a previously expressed stash of frozen breast milk. Unfortunately, we are not always able to accept donations for some of the following reasons:

- **The milk was expressed over 3 months ago.**
Although you can keep milk for your own healthy baby for up to 6 months in the freezer, any donations to a milk bank must be heat treated within 3 months of its expression to comply with national milk banking guidelines. This is because the babies who receive it are usually very tiny or very sick.
- **The amount to be donated is less than 2 litres.**
At least 2 litres of milk is required for each pasteurisation batch in the milk bank. Pasteurisation is a special heat treatment that is part of the safety processes that milk banks undertake.
- **You are taking certain medications.**
Medications that you are taking and that are safe for your baby may not be as safe for premature or sick babies because of the possibility that they will interact with any medications they are receiving and because they are more vulnerable to even tiny traces of medications.
- **You live too far away from a milk bank.**
There are time limits for the transportation of frozen breast milk and these mean milk cannot always be safely collected and delivered. If you live too far from the Hearts Milk Bank unfortunately we cannot accept your milk donations.

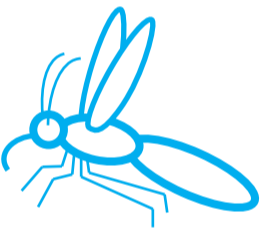
As every drop is precious,
here are some ways you can use your milk:



Once your baby is six months old you can use expressed breast milk in food like pancakes, scrambled eggs, mashed potatoes, and porridge instead of cow's milk or dairy-free alternatives.



Breast milk added to baby's bath may help to moisturise dry skin.



Breast milk has been suggested for helping to heal conjunctivitis, ear infections, minor burns, cuts, scrapes and insect bites. However always seek medical advice if the symptoms do not improve or worsen.



There are lots of easy recipes online for moisturising breast milk soap that can be made with only a couple of ingredients.



Older siblings can also benefit from breast milk in their diet as it contains antibodies and other immunity boosting components.



There are artisan crafts people who will incorporate your breast milk into jewellery or other items as a reminder of your feeding journey.

Tips:

If you have a very cold freezer (lower than -20°C) some guidelines suggest you can keep your frozen breast milk for longer than 6 months.

If your baby has been diagnosed with or is being treated for cow's milk protein allergy (CMPA) and you are currently excluding dairy from your diet but have previously expressed breast milk that you'd like to donate to a milk bank, we suggest you check first with your baby's doctor or paediatric dietician to see whether they want you to reintroduce this milk at a later stage.