



IWK Health

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www.iwk.nshealth.ca

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Pasteurized Donor Human Milk (PDHM)

The IWK supports all families in their feeding decisions. For families who choose to provide only breastmilk to their babies the IWK strives to make pasteurized donor human milk available when medically indicated.

Milk Matters

The Breastfeeding Committee of Canada and the World Health Organization recommend babies receive only human milk until they are 6 months old.

Human milk contains a wide variety of nutrients, antibodies, hormones and growth factors. These help baby to grow and fight infections. Human milk is also the easiest food source for babies to digest.

In situations where parents' own milk is not available, or extra milk is needed for medical reasons, the medical team may offer pasteurized donor human milk (PDHM) as part of your baby's care.

The Baby Friendly initiative includes 10 steps to successful breastfeeding as outlined by the Breastfeeding Committee of Canada.

Offering *pasteurized donor human milk* is supported by the Baby Friendly Initiative under steps five and six:

Step 5: *Assist mothers to breastfeed should they face challenges, including separation from their baby.*

Step 6: *Support mothers to exclusively breastfeed for the first six months, unless supplements are medically needed.*

What is Pasteurized Donor Human Milk?

- PDHM is human milk donated by approved donors to a milk bank.
- All PDHM used by the IWK comes from a milk bank that meets the essential requirements to provide safe human milk for babies.
- The PDHM process starts with the milk donor completing a health assessment. The donor also provides blood samples to be tested.
- When donor milk is accepted for pasteurization it goes through a very strict process including testing for bacteria and viruses.
- Any bacteria or viruses that could be harmful for babies are destroyed through pasteurization.
- A sample is sent to another lab. This lab will confirm that no germs remain after pasteurization.
- Most of the milk's nutritional and immune factors are maintained.
- The milk is frozen and stored until given to hospitals and then to families.
- This makes PDHM a safe option.

Is PDHM appropriate for my baby?

- If you have received this pamphlet PDHM may be an option to support the care for your baby.
- A health care provider will discuss any questions or concerns you may have.
- You will have the opportunity to provide consent for the use of PDHM.
- Your milk will always be used first prior to using PDHM.
- A feeding plan for home will be important to discuss with your health care provider.
- After baby leaves the hospital parents may buy PDHM through an accredited milk bank. Parents may need a prescription.

What are other feeding options for my baby?

Infant formulas

Ask the IWK nursing staff or your baby's health care provider for information.

Informal milk sharing is NOT recommended by the IWK Health Centre.

- Informal milk sharing is the process of providing human milk to a baby from a source other than the baby's parent.
- Milk would be unpasteurized when shared
- There is *no way* to confirm that unpasteurized donor human milk is safe for your baby.
- If you are considering using shared human milk please discuss with your baby's health care provider.

Resources:

IWK Health Centre
www.iwk.nshealth.ca

Breastfeeding Canada
www.breastfeedingcanada.ca

World Health Organization (WHO)
<http://www.who.int/nutrition/bfhi/ten-steps/en/>

Human Milk Banking Association of North America
(HMBANA)
www.hmbana.org

Breastfeeding Community of Practice
www.breastfeedingcop.com

Have questions?

Talk to your baby's health care provider.

**This patient/family guide should not be used to replace advice from your health care provider(s).*

**Le présent guide ne devrait pas remplacer les conseils de vos fournisseurs de soins de santé.*

**Please, no scented products or fragrances at the IWK. / * Prière de ne pas porter de parfum et de ne pas utiliser de produits parfumés au IWK.*

IWK Child Birth Care Team, Halifax, NS.
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