

Frequently asked questions

Why is my body producing milk?

Pregnancy stimulates hormones that tell your body to create milk. When you have experienced a loss, your body will not know that milk is not needed. As a result, you can choose whether you want to stimulate milk production by removing the milk by hand or by breast pump, or allow the milk production to suppress naturally over one to two weeks.

Can I donate if I have experienced infant or pregnancy loss?

If you have experienced pregnancy loss after 20 weeks, you may be able to establish a milk supply for donation.

What is the minimum donation required?

The milk bank requests a minimum of 5L (165 ounces) for donation however larger volumes within our storage guidelines are welcomed.

Is the Milk Bank the only way I can donate my milk?

Pasteurized donor milk in the Milk Bank goes through a rigorous testing process to ensure its safety. Health Canada warns against informal breast milk sharing.

Want to know more?

For more information and to find out if you are eligible to donate, please visit milkbankontario.ca

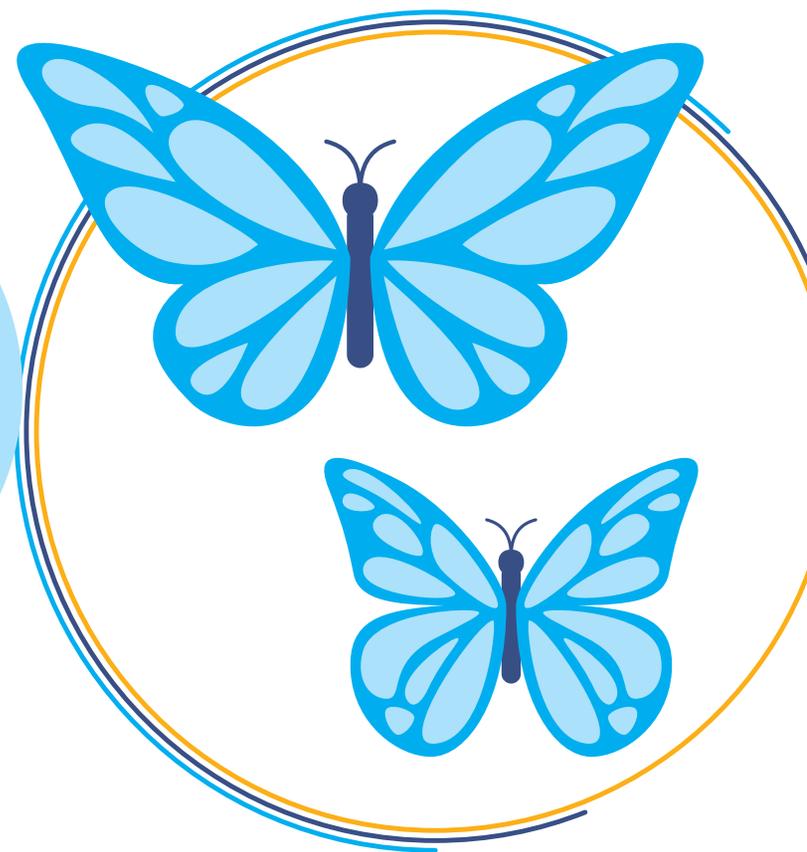
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The Rogers Hixon
Ontario Human Milk Bank
is a non-profit organization
and member of the Human
Milk Banking Association
of North America.

Located at:
Mount Sinai Hospital
Joseph & Wolf Lebovic Health Complex
18-252 600 University Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1X5
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milkbankontario.ca

Following Bereavement: The Option to Donate Your Breast Milk

Lactation information if you
have experienced an infant
or pregnancy loss



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**Sinai
Health**

Rogers Hixon Ontario
Human Milk Bank

Milk production after a loss

Pregnancy or infant loss is a devastating experience. Milk production (lactation) is a reality for most bereaved mothers, along with the shock, pain and sadness of the loss.

Your body will continue to produce breast milk for several weeks. This can be both physically (breast engorgement) and emotionally painful when you do not have an infant to feed. Some women may find that donating their breast milk to hospitalized babies in need can be very healing and help them with their grief. Other mothers may feel uncomfortable with giving away the milk meant for their baby.

If you have been pumping and have previously frozen milk, the milk bank can accept milk stored in a fridge-freezer for up to three months or a deep freezer for up to six months. Milk for donation can be expressed up until 18 months after your delivery.

Pumping your milk

Removing milk from the breast can be done by hand or with a pump. Whether you already have pumped and frozen your breast milk or you will just begin to pump, you may be able to donate it to The Rogers Hixon Ontario Human Milk Bank. Here your milk will be pasteurized and distributed to hospitals across Ontario for sick or preterm infants when their mothers have a limited breast milk supply.

If you are considering milk donation, you will need to:

1. Assess your eligibility to donate by visiting the milk bank website milkbankontario.ca which will provide you with pumping strategies and milk storage information. Submit your contact information online.
2. If eligible, pumping should begin as soon as possible, following your loss.
3. You will need to pump every 3-4 hours for 15-20 minutes from 6 a.m. to midnight to establish your milk supply.
4. If you are just starting to pump, it may take you between two to three weeks to pump the requested 5L (165oz).
5. Milk donation requires a screening process with one of our lactation consultants and blood tests.

Why donate your breast milk?

While a mother's milk is the gold standard for her baby, many mothers of extremely vulnerable hospitalized babies are unable to provide the volume their baby needs.

For these babies, pasteurized donor milk is recommended by The Canadian Paediatric Society and endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the World Health Organization.

"The first few weeks of my loss were the most difficult. Being able to pump and donate my breast milk helped me work through the grief and frustration of losing my precious little one, even though I cried as I pumped. That in itself was healing. I hope that I can encourage others to donate their precious gift and give to another baby in need."

- Rebeca

