

Donating to the Public Mothers' Milk Bank

What does it entail?

The process involves preserving your surplus breast milk. Your donations of milk make it possible for Héma-Québec to provide pasteurized human milk to infants born extremely preterm who require medical care in a hospital setting.

What are the benefits?

You and your child will not receive any benefit from your donation. However, there may be a health benefit for the preterm infant receiving the milk.

Criteria to register

- Breastfeeding your baby and able to produce surplus milk;
- Be in good health;
- Be 18 years of age or older;
- Be a non-smoker and not be using tobacco or nicotine-based products (e.g., gum, patches or electronic cigarettes).

How to register?

- First, read this Consent to human milk donation.
- Once well informed, if you want to pursue human milk donation, fill the online registration form.

Your qualification

Héma-Québec will provide you with an information guide on human milk donation and you will be contacted by a Héma-Québec representative to fill out a qualification questionnaire about your medical history and risk behaviours to protect the health of the recipient.

- In the event that you do not qualify, the representative will explain to you the reasons for your exclusion.
- If you qualify, you will be asked to provide blood samples for serological testing.

Donation process

Following your qualification, you will be responsible for:

- Expressing your milk following the hygiene measures recommended by Héma-Québec;
- Freezing the milk;
- Sending the bottles to Héma-Québec at regular intervals.

For every milk shipping, a health and lifestyle follow-up will be performed by a Héma-Québec representative.

Qualification of your milk

Your milk will be sent to Héma-Québec's Public Mothers' Milk Bank to be qualified. It will be subjected to:

- Microbiological analyzes;
- Pasteurization process.

Other uses of your donation

On rare occasions, your milk donation may be used for educational or quality control of the product purposes.

Alternatively, if your donation (or part of it) cannot be used for the Public Mothers' Milk Bank, it may be used for research purposes if you consent to this. The section "Donating Human Milk for Research" below explains what it entails.

Otherwise, your donation will be destroyed if it cannot be banked.

Blood tests

You blood sample will be tested to screen for the following blood-borne infectious diseases:

- Hepatitis B and C;
- Syphilis;
- Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV);
- Human T-lymphotropic virus (HTLV I/II).

You will be notified of any positive or indeterminate result on any of these tests while ensuring confidentiality. You will be invited to provide Héma-Québec with your physician's contact information so that he or she can, if necessary, perform proper medical follow-up.

- The banking process will be stopped.
- In the case of a disease that must be reported, the results will be sent to the Québec Public Health Authorities.

Risks

The volume of blood that you must provide is little (approximately two tbsp.); this is not harmful to your health. You may feel some discomfort associated with the collection of blood samples (for example, bruising, pain or redness at the puncture site).

Questions

If you have any specific questions and would like to speak with a Héma-Québec representative:

- Call 514-832-5000, extension 5253 or 1-800-565-6635, extension 5253
- Write to: mothersmilk@hema-quebec.qc.ca

Consent

Your participation in the Public Mothers' Milk Bank and donation of human milk are entirely voluntary. You can withdraw your consent and terminate your participation at any time without consequences.

You will not receive any compensation for your participation.

Personal information collected by Héma-Québec

Your consent to participate in the Public Mothers' Milk Bank allows Héma-Québec to collect only the information about you that is necessary for the human milk donation process.

All information collected by Héma-Québec about you is treated confidentially and securely and is retained as long as necessary.

With the intention of continuously improving its knowledge in the field of live donations, Héma-Québec may use the information collected for educational, research and statistical purposes or to communicate with you.

You have the right to consult your medical record to verify the information collected and have it rectified if necessary.

Donating Human Milk for Research

What does it entail?

If your milk donation does not qualify for the Public Bank, it is still valuable for research purposes on human milk. Only the portion of your milk that cannot be used for the Public Mothers' Milk Bank will go to research.

Ethical approval of projects

For a research project to benefit from human milk unqualified for banking, it must have been approved by the Héma-Québec Research Ethics Board.

Héma-Québec distributes human milk for research projects that are duly approved ethically and scientifically.

The milk used for research will be destroyed once the research has been completed.

Confidentiality of your information

Héma-Québec protects your personal information. It will not be disclosed to the research teams. Milk will be identified with a unique identifier that will be kept confidential at Héma-Québec.

Héma-Québec may provide researchers with anonymous data on your health status for the purposes of qualifying the sample for their research project. However, it will be impossible for the researcher to identify you.

The results of the research may be the subject of a publication or a communication by the researcher. At no time will it be possible to identify you.

CONSENT TO HUMAN MILK DONATION

In order to verify the proper conduct of the research and ensure your protection, your research file could be reviewed by the Héma-Québec Research Ethics Board.

Risks and benefits

Donating for research does not pose any additional risk to your health or that of your child.

There is no benefit to you or your child and you will not be compensated for your participation.

However, by consenting for research, you will help researchers better understand human milk's unique properties and improve existing treatments. These scientific advances will benefit the population as a whole.

Consent

You are free to support human milk research and you can withdraw your consent at any time without prejudice.

The research results could contribute to the creation of commercial products from which you will not receive any financial benefit.

Questions

For more information about admissible research projects, you can consult the section dedicated to the human milk on Héma-Québec's web site at <https://www.hema-quebec.gc.ca/lait-maternel/index.en.html>.

For any question about your rights or if you have a complaint to be formulated, you can communicate with the administration office of the Héma-Québec Research Ethics Board at 514-832-5000, extension 5370, or toll free at 1-888-666-4362, extension 5370.

Please go back to the website to fill in the registration form and certify that you have read this consent document in order to agree to human milk donation as per the above mentioned conditions.