

Got extra breastmilk? Then the BC Women's Milk Bank needs YOU!

The BC Women's Milk Bank has operated for over thirty years and is the only human milk bank left in Canada. It provides pasteurized donor milk to high risk and ill children when their mothers are not able to provide enough breast milk. Donated breastmilk offers almost all of the qualities of a mother's own breastmilk. It is nutritionally superior, easier to digest and helps to protect against many serious illnesses.

The growing demand for donor milk has led to breastmilk available for purchase on websites such as Craigslist and Ebay, and although this seems like the next-best alternative to a mother's own milk, buyer beware! There is no way of knowing the health status of the donors over the Internet. Informal sharing offers no established standards to ensure the safe handling, storage and transporting of the milk. HIV, Hepatitis B and C and syphilis are some of the diseases that can be passed through unpasteurized breastmilk from unknown sources. Informal milk sharing carries with it numerous risks.

The **World Health Organization** states that banked human milk is the best choice when breastfeeding or expressed breastmilk from the baby's own mother is not available. **Give a gift that lasts a lifetime and donate your extra breastmilk!** Healthy mothers who are producing more milk than baby needs (and their baby is under 1 year old) can easily become donors. The **screening process** involves a telephone interview, your doctor or midwife is consulted and blood tests are done at a local lab. The blood tests include: HIV-1, HIV-2, HTLV-1, HTVV-2, Syphilis, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. Because of the cost of screening, mothers are screened only when they are able to donate at least 3 litres (100 oz.) of milk.

A local registered charity **Breastfeeding Matters--South Vancouver Island** has supported of the Milk Bank since 1996 and raised funds to assist local families with costs of shipping milk to or from the Milk Bank in Vancouver. They are also the presenting sponsor (with VIHA) for the annual Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge. The purpose of the event is to celebrate breastfeeding and show support for breastfeeding women and their families. 2008's Challenge will be the first ever global synchronized breastfeeding event. The goal is to set a world record for most babies nursing simultaneously.

Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge 2008

SilverCity Victoria at Tillicum Centre

October 11, 2008

Doors open: 10 am

Latch-on count: 11 am sharp

For more information about the milk bank, visit

<http://www.bcwomens.ca/Services/PregnancyBirthNewborns/HospitalCare/Breastfeeding.htm>

For more information about the Quintessence Breastfeeding Challenge, visit

www.babyfriendly.ca

For local information about the Challenge and Breastfeeding Matters, please contact Julie McCracken, contact info below.

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