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## What is donor human milk?

Donor human milk is breast milk that is donated by mothers to help feed other babies.

## Why does my baby need donor milk?

A mother's breast milk is the best source of nutrition for their baby. Sometimes, a mother might not be able to produce enough milk to meet their baby's needs. Donor milk is the next best choice if the mother's own milk is not available or if they are unable to produce enough.

Not only does human milk provide good nutrition, but it is like medicine for babies with special needs. It helps to protect them from infection and to promote healing. Babies with special needs may include those:

- Born before or at 32 weeks..
- Born weighing 1500 grams (3 pounds 5 ounces) or less.
- With stomach or digestive system problems.
- Who need or have had bowel (the intestines) or heart surgery.

## Is donor milk safe for my baby?

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta only uses donor milk from milk banks that follow strict guidelines set by the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA). These guidelines include:

- Mothers who donate their milk must go through careful health screenings.
- Donated milk from several mothers is mixed together. It is then heated (pasteurized) to kill germs (bacteria and viruses), just like cow's milk you buy in the store.
- After heating, it is tested to make sure germs do not grow in the milk. This extra step helps make sure the milk is free of germs.

Many doctors believe pasteurized donor human milk is a safe feeding choice for babies. Talk with the doctor if you have questions about whether donor milk is safe for your baby.

## How long will my baby need donor milk?

Your baby will need donor milk until your milk supply is adequate or until they are stable enough to switch to infant formula.

## What else do I need to know?

You will need to sign a permission form called consent before we can use donor human milk to feed your baby. Talk with the doctor about your questions and concerns before you sign it.

**This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.**

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**