

## **Information for Recipients of Pasteurized Donor Human Milk (PDHM)**

### **Why is breast milk the ideal food for infants?**

An exclusive breast milk diet is recommended for the first 6 months of life. Breast milk provides the best nutrition for optimal growth and has enzymes to help with digestion. It reduces the risk of illness through protective antibodies. It also contains growth factors, hormones and prebiotics. This composition of human breast milk is unique and cannot be perfectly imitated in the commercial formula milk preparations.

### **Why PDHM?**

Although own mother's breast milk is the first choice, a new mother may sometimes not be able to produce enough breast milk for the first few or in subsequent days despite maximal effort. In other cases, a mother's breast milk may not be available if she is suffering from a serious medical condition. In such instances using PDHM can be life saving for infants especially if they are premature and sick.

Medical research has proven that breast milk improves the health outcomes of all babies, both term and preterm. In particular, using formula milk in preterm infants puts more strain on their immature digestive and immune systems. They have difficulty digesting milk and are prone to necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC). NEC causes the intestines to be damaged and it can lead to death of the baby.

In full term infants with certain medical conditions such as heart disease and gastro-intestinal malformations, the use of breast milk offers protection from infections, reduces feeding intolerance and fosters better long term growth and development.

### **How is the donor milk collected and stored?**

All donors are screened via a questionnaire and blood tests to ensure they are healthy. KK Human Milk Bank (KKHMB) follows strict international guidelines handling and processing of donor milk. Donor milk is stored in special freezers with continuous temperature monitoring.

### **Are there possible risks related to feeding PDHM?**

The risk of acquiring an infection via PDHM is immeasurably small. All donor milk undergoes a process called pasteurization to kill any disease-causing germs in the milk. The pasteurized milk is tested to ensure it is free of bacteria before it is given to recipients. The benefits of PDHM far outweigh this risk, and the risk of formula feeding, especially for premature infants.

### **Can I choose not to give PDHM to my child or withdraw consent later?**

Yes. You can choose not to consent to PDHM or withdraw consent for PDHM at any time. This will not affect the quality of medical care given to your child.

**Who are eligible for PDHM?**

- Preterm babies less than 33 weeks gestation or  $\leq$  1500g birthweight with no or insufficient mother's own milk.
- Sick babies (more than 32 weeks gestation) admitted in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, High Dependency with qualifying medical conditions such as congenital heart disease, gastrointestinal disease or brain injury or abnormal doppler study in fetal scans or other specified reasons as advised by the medical team
- Compassionate indications:
  - Infants in whom own mother's milk is contraindicated due to illness or medications (Eg: maternal HIV, maternal chemotherapy)
  - Infants who don't have access to own mother's milk (Eg: adopted babies, deceased mother)

**Is PDHM chargeable?**

Yes, PDHM is chargeable. This is to cover the cost of processing the donor milk to make it safe for us. The milk bank operates on a non-profit model.

**When is PDHM discontinued?**

PDHM will be discontinued when:

- Mother has established her own milk supply
- Upon discharge from SGH

- Medical team decides that child no longer requires PDHM
- Parent(s) withdraw consent for PDHM
- PDHM prescribed is not used for the intended recipient/purpose

**Will anybody know that my child is receiving PDHM?**

For hospitalized patients, it is documented in the medical notes that your child is receiving PDHM. However, all information obtained by SGH/ KKH will be kept confidential and only accessible by authorized personnel.

**Will I know who the donor is?**

No. Donor information is not available to the recipient.

**How can I request for PDHM?**

Your child must meet one of the eligibility criteria listed above. You need to produce a referral letter, indicating the reason why PDHM is being requested, from your child's healthcare provider. You can email or call the milk bank (see contact details below) if you need further information.

**If I have questions about donor milk, who can I contact?**

You can speak to the doctor or medical team in charge of your baby.

You may also contact KKHMB via:

Phone: 6394-1986

Email: [milkbank@kkh.com.sg](mailto:milkbank@kkh.com.sg)

Or visit KKHMB located at:

KK Women's and Children's Hospital

100 Bukit Timah Road

Singapore 229899

Level 2, Women's Tower

Operation hours: Monday to Friday (except public holidays)  
8.30am-5.00pm. (Lunch hour: 1.00-2.00pm)

**For information on Fatwa on Milk Bank:**

<https://learnislam.sg/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/FINALMILK-BANK-Booklet.pdf>