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Achieving Resilient and Inspiring Families

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WELCOME TO THE ARIF TIMES!

As we welcome 2024, it would be good to reflect on your achievements and roles. Let's celebrate the diversity in breastfeeding experiences by learning more about the Milk Bank and Fatwa behind it. Breastfeeding is definitely a choice for the self and the baby. We understand that breastmilk brings in the best for babies, and there is so much evidence supporting that.

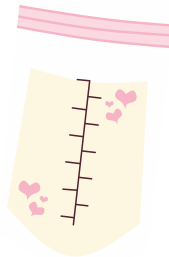
However, there are also many reasons why a mother is not able to breastfeed. This should not discourage mothers from offering what is good. The ultimate goal is to fulfil the baby's nutritional needs via breastmilk and to provide an opportunity for bonding between the parents and the baby via nursing and feeding. This is very important to continue till the baby is ready for solid food. Husbands can also help in giving the expressed breast milk to support and encourage the process of "continued breastfeeding". Both husband and wife can do this together!

What we need to know about Milk Bank

An interview with Temasek Foundation Community Milk Bank Programme, Dr Pooja Agarwal Jayagobi

What is a milk bank, and who are eligible to receive the donated milk?

A milk bank is a service which operates like a blood bank. It screens, collects, processes, and dispenses by prescription breast milk donated by mothers who have excess.



The main group of infants who can receive donor milk are the hospitalised premature and sick infants in all the restructured and private hospitals across Singapore, whose mothers are not able to produce sufficient breast milk for them. Infants with medical conditions such as heart disease and gut malformations are also eligible.

The breast milk of mothers who are HIV positive, receiving chemotherapy or radioactive medications or consuming drugs of abuse is unsafe for babies. Infants of these mothers may also benefit from the use of donor milk. The milk bank also provides donor milk on compassionate grounds to infants who are adopted or fostered out or whose mothers are critically ill or have unfortunately passed away.

We are an inclusive milk bank and all communities in multiracial Singapore have an equal access to donor milk.

Contributors

A/Prof Suzanna Sulaiman

Head and Senior Consultant

Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology
KK Women's and Children's Hospital

Dr Pooja Agarwal Jayagobi

Senior Consultant

Department of Neonatology
KK Women's and Children's Hospital

Ustaz Tajuddin bin Noor

Programme Manager

Project ARIF @ AMP

Shakira Khaliq

Registered Assistant Nurse Clinician

International Board
Certified Lactation
Consultant

KK Women's and Children's Hospital

Siti Nurzakiah Zar'an

Senior Medical Social Worker

Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology
KK Women's and Children's Hospital

Kindly email

projectarif@kkh.com.sg for any comments or feedback.

Log in to <https://www.projectarif.sg> for other Project ARIF Resources.

For moms who have an oversupply of milk, how can they proceed to donate them?

Mothers are welcome to donate their excess breast milk to the milk bank.

They will be screened with a lifestyle questionnaire and blood tests to ensure they are healthy and free from communicable diseases such as HIV, Hepatitis B and C and Syphilis prior to being accepted as donors.

To be eligible, their baby needs to be below one year old.



If a mom lacks milk supply, can she request to receive milk from the milk bank?



We request mothers who are considering the use of donor milk for their baby to contact the milk bank via email or a phone call.

It is important for us to find out more about the baby's condition to help us ascertain the suitability of donor milk for the baby.

We would want to know if the breastfeeding difficulties lead to insufficient milk supply. This enables us to guide the mother in seeking lactation support if needed.

Once donor milk is provided, we will keep track of the baby's health and growth by checking in with the parents every few weeks to ensure that the baby is growing healthily. In some cases, they may be requested to bring the baby back to hospital for more detailed assessments.

If you are interested in being a donor or wish to request donor milk and would like to find out more about the Temasek Foundation Community Milk Bank Programme, contact us at Tel: 6394 1986, or email us at milkbank@kkh.com.sg

Milk Motherhood and Milk Bank in Islam

By Ustaz Mohamed Tajuddin bin Noor

What is milk motherhood (Ibu susuan)?

Milk motherhood is a concept that is deeply rooted in our Islamic jurisprudence and was practised by the companions during the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Islam is unique in which the practice of breastfeeding of other infants establishes a special relationship known as “milk kinship”, carrying implications for marriage and interactions.

It is important to note that certain conditions must be met to establish milk kinship. In the Shafi'i School of Thought, the infant must be breastfed five times, and each feed must be done until the baby is full. The breastfeeding also needs to occur within the first two years of age and by the same person. This establishes a connection to that of blood relations, with implications for matters such as marriage and modesty.



Can Muslim mothers donate their expressed breast milk to the Milk Bank?

The Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) has provided a fatwa (religious ruling) regarding milk banks. MUIS acknowledges that the primary objective of milk banks is to provide necessary nutrition to infants in need, especially those born prematurely or with medical vulnerabilities.

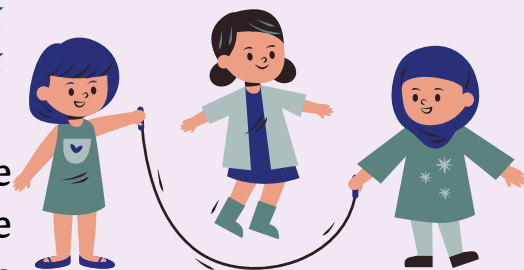
Donating breast milk to milk banks is permissible as long as it is done with the intention of helping those in need and adhering to the principles of Islamic ethics.

Importantly, MUIS clarifies that the act of donating breast milk to a milk bank does not establish kinship, ensuring that traditional boundaries in relationships are maintained (mahram).



As a mother whose child is consuming donated milk from the milk bank, how can I be sure that the consumption won't establish milk kinship?

The MUIS fatwa is based on a comprehensive understanding of Islamic jurisprudence and the context of milk banking. Some of the considerations are:

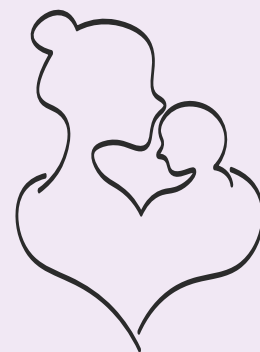


1.Amount and number of feedings using breast milk

The source of milk supply given to premature babies will not be limited to one donor for each baby. The hospital will in fact give the milk from one donor to a few babies in the ward until this supply is finished. This means that a premature baby will receive milk from different donors throughout the time in the NICU, without knowing the total amount of milk consumed from each individual donor.

2. Issue of uncertainty (Jahalah)

The status of doubt that exists in the identity of the milk donor as well as in the amount and rate of milk being donated can cause the non-establishment of a milk-kinship relationship between the donor and the premature baby.



3. Method of feeding

Premature babies are fed milk through a tube inserted through the baby's nose. The trial of oral feeding will start only after 32 weeks, and milk is given in small amounts. The method of feeding to establish milk kinship has been debated amongst scholars and some opinions mentions that only the act of suckling directly from the breast of the woman would cause milk kinship to be established.



For an in-depth reading on this fatwa, please visit <https://www.muis.gov.sg/officeofthemufti/Fatwa/Milk-Bank---English>)

The act of donating breast milk to milk banks aligns with compassion, care and community support. As Singapore continues to celebrate diversity and promote community well-being, integrating milk banking within the Islamic framework underscores shared responsibility and holistic societal betterment.

Keep Calm & Breastfeed

by Asst Nurse Clinician Shakira Khaliq



Mindfulness is defined as the practice of gently focusing your awareness on the present moment. By practising mindfulness with patience and compassion for yourself, you will be able to fully immerse yourself in the present moment (Healthline.com).

Mindfulness practice has been shown to reduce stress, anxiety and depression symptoms (Healthline.com). Mindfulness strategies encourage the individual to adopt mindfulness attitude such as trust, patience, to be kind and non-judgemental to oneself and to accept or let go.

It is beneficial to practice mindfulness during your breastfeeding and/or parenting journey as it is a vulnerable and challenging period for many. Having coping strategies such as mindfulness practices can allow you to enjoy the journey. It is also important to remain calm while breastfeeding as this will encourage the release of the hormone called Oxytocin.

“The calmness while breastfeeding that mothers report is partly governed by oxytocin...Oxytocin plays a major role in stress reduction, bonding and the development of trust.”

(Wamback & Spencer, 2021)





How to induce oxytocin release:

1. Skin to Skin contact with baby (Both mothers and fathers can do this)
2. Breast massage and nipple stimulation
3. Corect latching technique (refer to picture for signs of a good latch)
4. Looking at pictures / videos of your baby (for mothers who are pumping and whose babies are separated from them)



picture from: <https://prenatalinsights.com/blog/latch-the-first-fundamental-of-breastfeeding/>

How husbands/family members can contribute:



1. Support is crucial to success in breastfeeding.
2. Obtain knowledge together during the pregnancy stage. Take notes to use as reminders.
3. Provide plenty of reassurance and encouragement to mother. The early days are usually tougher as she is coping with a new baby and frequent feedings.
4. Practice mindfulness together.

Let us be mindful to the vulnerabilities and challenges during the postnatal period. The practice of mindfulness reminds us to be kind and non-judgemental.

