



How to Talk to Bereaved Mothers About the Option to Donate Milk

Starting the Conversation

Speaking to a bereaved mother about milk donation after infant loss requires a unique blend of deep empathy, compassion, and respect. Here's a sensitive approach to guide that conversation:

1. Lead With Acknowledgment and Compassion

Start by recognizing her loss first and foremost. Before bringing up milk donation as an option, it's essential to honor her grief. *"I want to start by saying how truly sorry I am for your loss. There are no words for what you're going through, but I'm here to support you in any way you need."*

2. Offer Milk Donation as an Option, Not a Suggestion

Frame the idea gently—as something that some parents find meaningful, not as something expected or encouraged. *"Some mothers have found comfort in donating their milk—it's a way to honor their baby's life and help others. But this is entirely your choice. We understand that this is not a choice that is right for everyone."*

3. Give Her Space and Control

She may feel overwhelmed. Offer information, but make it clear she's in control. *"I can give you some information about milk donation if you'd like, or I can be here if you just want to talk. Whatever feels right for you."*

4. Be Prepared for a Range of Emotions

Donating milk after loss can be healing for some but triggering for others. Let her know all reactions are valid. *"There's no right or wrong way to feel about this. Whether you choose to donate or not, your decision is deeply respected."*





The Donor Screening Process for Bereaved Donors

Mothers' Milk Bank of Tennessee provides a simplified and supportive process for bereaved mothers. If a mother is interested in starting the process to become a donor, please direct her to milkbanktn.org/donate-after-loss.

There, she will be directed to complete a brief prescreening application. It is important to note, there is not a minimum donation of ounces for bereaved mothers. We also accept milk that was collected and frozen prior to the screening process.

Once the mother submits the prescreening application, she will be prompted to schedule a screening call with one of our professional and compassionate donor screeners who will guide the mother through the remainder of the process.

Moms that experience loss of their baby in the NICU may leave their milk at the hospital if the facility is willing. A member of our team will pick up the milk if it is emotionally or physically difficult for the mother to transport her milk to a Milk Drop Depot.

If initiating the process online feels too overwhelming but a mother has made the decision to donate her breastmilk, she may call our main line at 615-933-8877 between the hours of 9 am- 3 pm Monday through Friday to talk with a member of our team.

As a way to honor mothers and the babies they lost way too soon, Mothers' Milk Bank of Tennessee has a tree mural at the Milk Bank. Each baby is represented by an engraved gold leaf on the large tree of the mural. We invite each Bereaved Donor to submit their inscription. There is no cost to the family. This is our simple way of showing each family that they are always in our hearts, and we are committed to honoring their baby's legacy.

