

"I realized the only way I could make peace with my daughter's death, was to find a way to honor her life. When my milk came in the morning after Elwyn was born, my doctor offered me solutions to dry it up, but I declined. My breastmilk was the only physical connection I had left to my daughter, and I didn't want to let it go to waste. By becoming a breastmilk donor, my precious daughter Elwyn Rose continues to live on in Spirit through the many little lives. The milk she left behind for me to donate provided more than 1,000 meals for some of America's most fragile and vulnerable newborns. I cannot think of a better way to honor my daughter's memory, and I am forever grateful to be a part of this amazing community.

I hope that the milk my daughter left behind will go on to help many fragile and struggling babies to survive and to thrive, so that another anxious mother need not experience the loss that I have suffered. By this, I hope that Elwyn's story can become a legacy of hope to inspire other grieving families.

Every life, no matter how short, is precious and meaningful. I believe everybody has a purpose on this Earth, and Elwyn fulfilled her purpose by bringing people together, and bringing out the best in them while she was alive. Even in her loss, she continues to bless others with the milk I am donating on her behalf, and it is my hope to honor her memory by inspiring others to do the same."

- Courtney, bereaved mother



Mothers' Milk Bank of Tennessee is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit milk bank dedicated to providing safe, pasteurized donor human milk to the most vulnerable babies.

Mothers' Milk Bank of Tennessee is a member of and follows the guidelines mandated by the Human Milk Banking Association of North America.



milkbanktn.org



Teardrops and Milk Drops

The loss of a baby is a profound and devastating experience. Mothers' Milk Bank of Tennessee offers support to bereaved mothers by guiding them through lactation options after loss.



The delivery of your baby stimulates hormones that tell your body to make milk. Milk usually comes in three to five days after delivery. Your breasts will feel fuller and may leak milk. You may feel like you have a fever. Everyone experiences this process differently. Whether your milk is just coming in or you have been making milk for a while, Mothers' Milk Bank of Tennessee is here to help guide you through your lactation options after loss.

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I want to suppress my milk.

Suppressing your milk supply will stop milk from continuing to be created. This can be done when milk first comes in or later if you have expressed some of the milk. If you do nothing to stimulate your breasts your body will stop making milk and you milk will slowly dry up. This may take a few days.

While your milk is drying up you may feel some discomfort and may leak some milk. You can use a nursing pad inside your bra to absorb the leaking milk. Wear a bra that supports your breasts and is not too tight or too loose.

“Binding” the breasts (wrapping tightly to suppress milk) is not recommended and can cause plugged milk ducts and breast infections. Cabbage leaves or cool compresses can be used to relieve swelling and minor discomfort. Expressing small amounts can also relieve some of the pressure.

I want to express my milk.

Expressing your milk can be done for a short or a long time. Milk supply may naturally dry up, or you can suppress the supply when you are ready to stop expressing. Expressing milk can be done either by hand or with the help of a pump. Early stimulation of your breasts will help build up a good milk supply. Expressing eight times a day will give you the best results. If you already have a milk supply, continue expressing as often as is comfortable for you.

Questions about suppressing or expressing your milk? Please call your healthcare provider. You may also visit milkbanktn.org to access more resources.

I want to donate my milk.

Some mothers find a sense of healing by donating their breastmilk to other babies in need. Becoming a milk donor after the devastating loss of a child is a very personal decision.

Donating through a nonprofit milk bank is a safe way to share your milk according to the FDA. Mothers' Milk Bank of Tennessee is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. We are also a member of and follow the guidelines mandated by the Human Milk Banking Association of North America.

Teardrops and Milk Drops is Mothers' Milk Bank of Tennessee's donor program for bereaved mothers. If you decide becoming a milk donor is the right decision for you, this program provides a simplified path to becoming a donor.

All costs for screening and processing your milk is covered by Mothers' Milk Bank of Tennessee.

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 if you are already pumping.

Who will receive my milk?

Pasteurized Human Donor Milk (PHDM) is prioritized for the smallest and most medically fragile babies, for whom research shows the most positive benefits from human milk. Mothers' Milk Bank of Tennessee distributes PDHM to hospital neonatal intensive care units (NICUs). Your donations will benefit sick and premature infants who require this vital nutrition to thrive.

Steps to becoming a donor

- Visit milkbanktn.org/donate-after-loss
- Complete prescreening application
- Schedule a brief phone interview
- Have a blood test covered by us

After approval

Once approved, you can drop off your donation to one of our Milk Drop Depots located near you. You may also ship your milk frozen to our facility in Murfreesboro if there is not a Milk Drop Depot conveniently located in your area. If you need to ship your milk, a member of our team will guide you through the process. All shipping costs are covered by Mothers' Milk Bank of Tennessee.

Find a Milk Drop Depot Near You



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Giving my milk to help infants born too soon was healing for me. It didn't bring back my precious baby, and it didn't erase my pain, but it helped me to have a purpose. I gave milk in honor of my beautiful girl who wouldn't need it, so it was a gift from the two of us to those who would live because of it.
—”
-Michelle, bereaved mother

Mothers' Milk Bank of Tennessee believes it is crucial to provide bereaved mothers information about managing their milk production and to support them in the decisions they make about their milk.