



Memory Milk Gift

Donation after loss.

Here at the Milk Bank at Chester we believe that every bereaved family across the UK should be given the choice to donate milk in memory of their baby.

Screening process

Our dedicated bereavement team are here to guide you through the screening process and are working closely with bereavement teams across the country to ensure that the process is as simple as possible. The first step is to contact us and we will talk you through the donor recruitment process and answer any questions you may have. Alternatively you can fill in the online screening form on our website if you would prefer.

We will ask you about any medication you have taken while expressing the milk, please be aware that sometimes we may be unable to send milk to hospitals if you have taken certain medication. In these circumstances we will offer you the choice to donate your milk to the milk bank for research purposes or to help us to ensure best practice.

The next stage is to complete our donor record form which we will send by email. When we have received the completed form we will arrange to collect your milk at a convenient time and will discuss the most convenient way for you to have blood samples taken. All donors are tested for HIV 1-2, HTLV 1-2, hepatitis and syphilis, you will

be informed of your results within approximately 2 weeks.

Continuing to express

Some mothers choose to continue to express milk following the loss of their baby. While this option does not suit everyone, some families find comfort in continuing to express and donate. We encourage families to discuss milk donation with the healthcare professionals who are caring for them to help make a decision that feels right for them.

Your healthcare professional will also be able to give you advice about expressing, including how soon to start and how often to express.

How your milk will help

Donor milk is recommended for premature and vulnerable babies when their own mother's milk is not available due to illness or while establishing their milk supply. Your milk will be issued to one of 70 different hospitals supplied by the the Milk Bank at Chester.

Thank you for thinking of others at this difficult time, we hope you will find some small comfort in knowing your precious milk donation has helped vulnerable babies.

Memory Milk Gift

Our 'memory milk tree' is located in the milk bank and we are delighted to be able to offer our families who donate after loss the opportunity to have your baby's name added to the tree. We also offer a wooden 'memory milk pebble' with your baby's name on to remember their precious gift to others.

These options are available at any time during your donation journey or afterwards – if you donated in the past before memory milk gift was

established we are able to offer these options to you.



Tracy and Emily's story

"Prior to my daughter's birth, I knew that the chances of her surviving would be slim. She had to be delivered at just 28 weeks due to the complications of the pregnancy. I had the opportunity to express a small amount of colostrum (the very important first milk your breast produces) before Emily was delivered but it wouldn't be enough to sustain her whilst I recovered from my surgery. This was the moment I learnt about donor milk; milk from other mums that had been expressed, collected, pasteurised and then distributed to hospitals for babies in need just like Emily.

On the 16th February 2017, Emily was born but sadly passed away a few hours later. The kindness of those other mothers donating their milk really stuck with me so I decided to give it a shot myself. At the time I didn't know if I would be able to do it, especially through the grief of our loss. I started off slowly but soon felt a sense of comfort knowing that the milk that would have been for Emily was going to babies who were in desperate need of it.

There was part of me that felt that even though she wasn't here, she was still having a positive impact on the world and that this would be part of her legacy. I expressed for the milk bank and did so for about 3 months. The staff were incredibly supportive; they made sure I had everything I needed, they would check up on me, arrange collections and were happy to talk about things over the phone. I think the whole experience gave me a bit of purpose and positivity during a time where I constantly felt like my world was falling apart."

Where can I find out more?

milkbank.chester@nhs.net

www.milkbankatchester.org.uk

