

# Unpasteurized Human Breast Milk

Many cultures use a “wet nurse” (a woman who breastfeeds another woman’s child) to provide human milk for a baby when a mother can’t. In the United States, it’s more common for women to contact someone they know, or visit online donor sites for human milk when their baby needs it. However, it’s important to be aware of the risks of giving your baby unpasteurized human milk.

## What is unpasteurized human breast milk?

Unpasteurized [un-PAST-you-ryzd] human breast milk is donated human milk that has not been screened, tested in a laboratory, or pasteurized [PAST-you-ryzd], a process of treating milk with heat.

## Why should I be concerned about unpasteurized human milk?

Unpasteurized milk from another woman can pass harmful chemicals or diseases to your baby. Human milk donors may look and feel healthy but can still have germs (bacteria or viruses) that can hurt your baby, sometimes months or years in the future.

Healthcare providers at Intermountain Healthcare, the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA) and government agencies such as the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), **DO NOT** recommend using human milk that has not been tested and pasteurized.

## What chemicals can pass through unpasteurized milk to my baby?

Human milk donors may be using medicines, herbs, dietary supplements, or illegal drugs. These can pass through unpasteurized milk and may harm your baby. They may also interact with medicines your baby’s healthcare provider prescribed.



## What diseases can my baby get from unpasteurized human milk?

Some diseases that can be found in unpasteurized breast milk may stay with your baby over their lifetime. This includes:

- **Cytomegalovirus**, [sy-tow-MEG-ah-loh-vy-russ] (CMV), which can cause hearing loss, brain injury, a lung infection called pneumonia [new-MOHN-yah], or liver disease.
- **Hepatitis** [hep-ah-TIE-tuss] **B and C**, viruses that can cause chronic (long-term) health problems, including liver disease and liver cancer.
- **Human immunodeficiency** [im-MYOO-noh-dee-FIH-shen-see] virus (HIV), which causes a lifelong disease that can lead to attacks on the baby’s immune (disease-fighting) system.

- **Human T-cell Leukemia** [loo-KEY-me-uh] virus (HTLV), a virus that can cause serious infections and a rare type of leukemia (blood cancer).
- **Syphilis** [SIF-ill-us], a disease caused by bacteria that can lead to fatal infections or serious chronic conditions.

Babies that are small, premature, or that have weak immune systems are especially sensitive to harmful substances that can be found in human milk.

If you're considering using unpasteurized human milk, talk to your baby's healthcare providers. They can help you meet your needs and your baby's needs safely.

### Questions for my child's doctor

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Intermountain Healthcare complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. Se proveen servicios de interpretación gratis. Hable con un empleado para solicitarlo. 我們將根據您的需求提供免費的口譯服務。請找尋工作人員協助。