



## Setting Up a Milk Collection Depot

### What is a Milk Collection Depot?

A Milk Collection Depot serves a local community by providing a space for women who have been screened as "donors" to drop off their raw, frozen donor breast milk for donation. The Depot receives and stores the frozen milk and then transports it to the BC Women's Provincial Milk Bank ("Milk Bank").



The Provincial Milk Bank at BC Women's receives frozen donor milk from multiple Milk Collection Depots. It pasteurizes this milk and distributes it to Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICU) in BC.

Milk Collection Depots are operated by Health Authorities. They are typically located in hospitals and public health units. Commercial or private spaces (e.g., home) are not acceptable.

### What is required to set up and operate a Milk Collection Depot?

The requirements to set up and operate a Milk Collection Depot are minimal and include:

#### Space and equipment

- Space for milk drop-off by screened donors and pick-up by couriers (easy access and parking are important considerations).
- Freezer dedicated for donor milk that has a lock and is in a secure location.
- Thermometer for daily measurement of freezer temperature.
- It is recommended that the freezer be on emergency power.:
  - If not on emergency power, freezer must be set-up with a "recording thermometer" that records temperature changes over a period of time so that the user can determine whether there has been a problem with the temperature since the last recording.
  - Ideally the thermometer will also have an alarm that will alert the user (or after-hours designate) if the temperature rises above a pre-programmed acceptable level.
- Access to a telephone and fax machine.



## Staffing

- Staff member designated to oversee the depot operations ("depot organizer"). This is usually a Public Health Nurse.
- Staff member (or volunteer supervised by staff) to contact newly screened donors and provide information about the local depot (hours, parking, drop-off location).
- Staff member (or volunteer supervised by staff) to receive donor milk from donors.
- Staff member (or volunteer supervised by staff) designated to package, complete the documentation and ship milk to the Milk Bank.
- Staff member (or volunteer supervised by staff) to check freezer temperature daily.

These requirements could be met by one person or several people as fits for the agency within which the depot is operating.

## What is the process for screening donors and accepting milk?

1. Mothers interested in becoming donors are encouraged to visit [www.bcwomens.ca](http://www.bcwomens.ca) (search Milk Bank) or call 604-875-3743 for information about donating milk.
2. To make sure their milk is safe for other babies, mothers are screened by BC Women's Lactation Services. Once approved as donors, the Milk Bank contacts the mother to ask about her preferred location to drop-off her donated milk. The Milk Bank provides donor contact information to the relevant Milk Collection Depot.
3. The depot contacts the mother and provides information about the depot (hours, parking and drop-off location). The donor drops her milk off as per instructions (drop-off is pre-arranged by phone).
4. The depot organizer or designate (staff/volunteer) checks that each container of milk is labelled with the donor's name, date the milk was expressed & the amount of milk in the container. The donation is recorded.
5. The depot organizer or designate places the plastic bag full of milk containers in the freezer.
6. After milk from multiple donors is collected, milk is shipped to the Milk Bank. Milk must be received by the Milk Bank within six months of the date that the milk was expressed (the sooner the better).

## Where can I get more information about setting up a Milk Collection Depot?

Call the BC Women's Provincial Milk Bank Coordinator at 604-875-2424, x6013.