

Special series examines the use of pasteurized donor human milk for vulnerable infants

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While the health effects of breastfeeding are well-recognized and apply to both mothers and children, some mothers may not be able to produce a milk supply to meet the needs of their child. When infants require hospitalization in the immediate newborn period doing to being born preterm or having other health complications, human milk is a vital life-saving medical intervention. If the use of mother's own milk is contraindicated (such as with a HIV positive mothers) or if a mother is unable to produce enough milk to meet her infant's needs, pasteurized donor human milk (PDHM) is the recommended alternative. In 2016, 5.25 million ounces of PDHM were distributed to hospitals caring for vulnerable infants across the United States and Canada.

A special series about research and clinical practice recommendations regarding pasteurized [donor](#) human milk (PDHM) has been published in the *Journal of Obstetric Gynecologic and Neonatal Nursing*. Guest editor of the series is Diane L. Spatz, PhD, RN-BC, FAAN, Professor of Perinatal Nursing and the Helen M. Shearer Professor of Nutrition at the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing (Penn Nursing).

"Interest in the use of PDHM and milk banking is growing globally. With that interest comes a need to understand how to ensure [donor milk](#) safety and recruit donors, the outcomes associated with the use of PDHM, and the cost of donor human milk compared to other interventions for hospitalized infants," said Spatz. "It's important that we continue to advance the knowledge about donor human milk and the importance of milk banks in the United States."

Articles in the series include:

- "Best Practices to Limit Contamination of Donor Milk in a Milk Bank," in which the authors describe standard operations of the Mothers' Milk Bank of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, best practices to limit the bacterial contamination of donor human milk, and implications for future research.
- "Experiences of Women Who Donated Human Milk," in which the authors explore the experiences of mothers who donated their [breast milk](#) to a hospital-based milk bank regulated by the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA).
- "Facilitating Milk Donation in the Context of Perinatal Palliative Care," in which the authors examined how a perinatal bereavement program engages women and families in the process of milk donation when the deaths of their newborns are anticipated.
- "Outcomes Associated With Type of Milk Supplementation Among Late Preterm Infants," in which the authors assess whether type of milk supplementation provided to breastfeeding late preterm infants was associated with hospital length of stay (LOS) or breastfeeding status at discharge.
- "Cost and Use of Pasteurized Donor Human Milk at a Children's Hospital," in which the authors describe research findings that show that donated human [milk](#) is a low-cost intervention compared with many other interventions for the care of hospitalized [infants](#).

More information: Diane L. Spatz. Pasteurized Donor Human Milk and Milk Banking Through the Human Milk Banking Association of North America, *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing* (2018). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jogn.2018.02.004](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jogn.2018.02.004)

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