



Western Health  
and Social Care Trust

## Human Milk Bank Newsletter

Providing Donor Expressed Breast Milk for all neonatal units throughout Ireland



Pictured from left to right are: Cecilia McBride, Human Milk Bank Technician; Vivienne Carson, Human Milk Bank Technician; Gabrielle McAloon, Clerical Officer; Elizabeth (Liz) Bailie, Human Milk Bank Co-ordinator along with donor mum Niamh Slevin and her four month old daughter Erin from Belleek who has donated four litres of human milk.

The Western Trust Human Milk Bank opened in August 2000. Since then it has helped thousands of neonatal babies all over Ireland.

In 2021 the milk bank processed a total donation of 2,142 litres of donor expressed milk and have provided approximately 1,427 litres of breast milk to 27 neonatal units in hospitals across Ireland, helping **844 babies**, including 100 sets of twins, 11 sets of triplets. From January to October 2022, **797 babies** have been supplied with donor expressed breast milk.

### Eliza's story

Baby Eliza was born prematurely at 24 weeks and received donor milk for a few days until her Mum's supply came in. Eliza is now thriving at home and her Mum went on to donate 20 litres to the Human Milk Bank.



## **What's New?**

The Milk Bank is always striving to improve the service we provide.

In May 2021 we commissioned a new Analyser which produces breakdown levels of nutritional values in the donor milk.

This process helps neonatal dietitians to ensure premature babies receive the correct nutritional needs for their gestational age.

We are pleased to inform that now in 2022, each batch of milk going out to our Neonatal Units has the nutritional data required by paediatric dietitians. This information will ensure babies that require a fortifier being added to their feeds will receive optimum nutritional support.

A video giving a short tour of the Human Milk Bank featuring its facilities and processes and how donated breast milk is distributed is available on the Western Health & Social Care Trust's website (<https://westerntrust.hscni.net>) and YouTube channel.

For more videos from Human Milk Bank donors click the links below:

<https://fb.watch/f7C-J0txPt/>

<https://fb.watch/f7D2L4ltKV/>

<https://fb.watch/f7D4r2azdf/>

### **Daniel's Story**

Our beautiful little boy Daniel was born with Edwards syndrome, a rare and life limiting condition. He was a very special boy indeed and we are so grateful for him. Sadly, his esophagus did not join up with his stomach. This meant that Daniel was unable to feed at all. As a mother, my job was to love and feed my baby. Without doubt I could love Daniel and did, but I was unable to feed him in any way. I was devastated. With the help of staff at NICU I was able to express and give small amounts of colostrum to Daniel for his comfort and, indeed, mine. Later I was given a double pump and all the equipment and advice required to express milk for the milk bank. There are some technical and scientific aspects to pumping and storing milk but with support and information I was able to overcome these challenges and get into a routine.

Daniel lived for 39 hours over 3 calendar days. He was buried 3 days later. The first opportunity I had to pump was the evening of his funeral, day 6. I pumped off 80mls from very full breasts. I felt positive. I pumped 8-12 times a day for the next 3 days and got nothing. With self-compassion, I decided to 'take the next day off' and perhaps accept that my body would not be able to do this.

However, when I pumped that evening I got 20mls which encouraged me. The next day I got 40-60mls each pump and was able to donate milk after just a few weeks of approx. 5 pumps a day.

In my process I was so conscious of how challenging it is for some mums of babies in NICU who perhaps, like me, may not be able to pump milk right away or where supply is affected by medication or shock and stress. These mums really need the milk that other mums can provide, and their babies depend on it. I know firsthand the devastating feeling of not being able to feed your baby. I am very grateful that I was able to provide milk for the milk bank and learn that Daniel's milk helped many premature and surgical babies and hopefully brought comfort to their mummies.

Mum – Maxine McFarland, Human Milk Bank Donor 2022



**If you would like to find out more about the Human Milk Bank and becoming a donor please contact the Human Milk Bank on Tel: (028) 68628333 or email**

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