Press Release

Joint Position Paper Published

The Sharing of Human Milk

Fort Worth, TX – In collaboration with the European Milk Bank Association (EMBA), the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA) presents this position paper in North America on the topic of selling and sharing of human milk.

It was written to provide information about milk sharing as well as recommendations for families of the potential threat to the health of their infants posed by the use of unscreened, untested breastmilk obtained or purchased via the internet. It is our hope that mothers are assisted and supported by health professionals, particularly the Lactation Consultants and Educators, in succeeding in their breastfeeding goals. A mother’s own breastmilk is superior for her infant.

In the event her milk is not available, then donor milk from a non-profit milk bank is the next best choice.

“Joining with our European counterpart, HMBANA understands how important it is for moms and their families that the maximum care be taken regarding the well-being of their babies”, states Pauline Sakamoto, MS, RN, PHN, HMBANA President.

“As an organization responsible for the world-wide standards for the safety of donor breastmilk, however, we understand the science of human breastmilk pasteurization and analysis. We want to be a resource for mom through our network of 18 mothers’ milk banks throughout North America. We welcome any and all opportunities to educate and are able to guide moms to make the most informed choices”, she added.

“Nonprofit human milk banks exist as a result of the generosity and kindness of mothers who choose to share their breastmilk with premature and sick infants. The expertise gained in this field drives our international milk bank associations to work to support all mothers to safely feed their babies. We advise
all parents to be aware of the risks involved in obtaining another mother’s milk and to consult qualified healthcare professionals before doing so”, added Gillian Weaver, President of the EMBA.

Related to the issues of quality and safety standards, HMBANA's Guidelines\(^1\) are recognized by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as safe for donor human milk\(^2\). These Guidelines are updated annually based upon advice from the American Association of Blood Banks (AABB), Canadian Blood Services, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Health Canada, the FDA, as well as in published clinical studies.

The Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA) promotes the health of babies and mothers through the provision of safe pasteurized donor milk and support of breastfeeding. HMBANA is internationally recognized as the expert in safe processing of donor human milk and in milk expression and storage. Established in 1985, it is the professional and trade organization of 18 non-profit member human milk banks in Canada and the US. In addition, there are 10 more non-profit human milk banks under development within the HMBANA system.

Learn more at www.hmbana.org


\(^2\)HMBANA’s Guidelines address three layers of recipient protection from disease transmission. First, donors are screened for medical and lifestyle risk factors, and serum screened for HIV, HTLV, syphilis, and Hepatitis B and C. Then, milk is pasteurized, a process that kills HIV, cytomegalovirus, as well as other viruses and bacteria. Lastly, no milk is dispensed after pasteurization until a culture is negative for bacteriological growth.

**Contact Information – European Milk Banking Association**

Gillian Weaver  
President, EMBA  
Phone 00 44 203 313 3559  
Cell: 00 44 7875577089  
Email:Gillian.weaver@yahoo.com

**Contact Information – Human Milk Banking Association of North America**

John M. Honaman, CFRE  
Executive Director, HMBANA  
Office: (817) 810-9984  
Cell: (817) 229-0240  
Email: jhonaman@hmbana.org  
LinkedIn Profile - https://www.linkedin.com/in/johnhonaman