

Hospital Authority “Hong Kong Breast Milk Bank” to commence service on January 6 next year (with photos)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) announced today (December 31) that the Hong Kong Breast Milk Bank (HKBMB), located at the Hong Kong Children's Hospital, will commence service on January 6, 2025. In the initial phase of service commencement, the HKBMB will recruit donors and accept breast milk donation, while the second phase of services is expected to begin in March of the same year, providing breast milk to premature or critically-ill newborns. This marks a milestone in neonatal medical services, providing a healthy start for the most vulnerable lives.

Director of the HKBMB, Dr Rosanna Wong, stated, "Breast milk is the best food for babies, providing nourishment and multiple health benefits. However, some mothers of extremely premature or critically-ill newborns are unable to breastfeed for various reasons. We appeal to eligible mothers who are currently breastfeeding to generously donate their breast milk to support these needy newborns, allowing them to receive adequate comprehensive nutrition and establish a protective barrier for their health."

Dr Wong added that, for preterm and sick babies, breast milk can offer protection from infections, feeding intolerance and life-threatening complications such as necrotising enterocolitis, and foster better long-term growth and development.

Donors have to be currently lactating, and their babies have to be under one year old. Mothers interested in becoming donors can register through the following methods:

1. Submit a form on the HKBMB official website (<https://www31.ha.org.hk/hkch/SupportUs/HKBMB/HowToBecome>);
2. Reach the HKBMB at 3513 6688; or
3. Contact the lactation clinic at HA hospitals (for those who have delivered in the respective hospitals)

Upon receiving donor registration, staff from the HKBMB or lactation clinics will invite potential donors for face-to-face interview, completion of assessment questionnaire, and blood tests. Eligible donors will sign a consent form for breast milk donation, after which healthcare personnel will provide details regarding the donation process and appropriate support. The HKBMB will arrange qualified courier to collect breast milk from the donors' homes and deliver it to the HKBMB for further processing, adhering to strict standards. Donors can complete the entire donation process in the comfort of their own home, making it simple and convenient.

To ensure safety and quality, breast milk collected will undergo a robust processing system of pasteurisation, microbiological testing and nutritional analysis, all under precise temperature control. Then it will be supplied to nine public hospitals with neonatal intensive care units for prescribing to premature and critically-ill newborns. The HKBMB hopes to collect 1000 litres of breast milk annually, benefiting 450 to 600 premature and critically-ill newborns.

For more information on donating breast milk, please visit the HKBMB website (www.ha.org.hk/hkch/hkbmb) or refer to the pamphlet (see Annex). Pamphlets are also available at the Obstetrics & Gynaecology and Paediatrics departments in public hospitals, as well as Maternal and Child Health Centres under the Department of Health.

