

Supporting Infant Feeding During a Disaster or Emergency

The information contained herein should not be used as a substitute for medical advice. If you have questions about infant feeding, please contact your healthcare provider or an International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC).

- Human milk remains the best feeding option for infants during a natural disaster or emergency.
- Human milk consumption decreases the risk of infection and disease, including ear infections, pneumonia, and diarrhea among infants and offers health benefits to both the lactating parent and infant.
- If breastfeeding or chestfeeding is not possible, support is needed to ensure infants have a safe and accessible food source. Ensure caretakers are working with their healthcare provider and/or WIC clinic to find appropriate food for their infants.

Supporting Breastfeeding or Chestfeeding Parents with Lactation During an Emergency

Breastfeeding or chestfeeding parents must protect their milk supply to continue to offer human milk to their infants during natural disasters or emergency situations. Helpful information includes:

- Resources for infant feeding during a disaster or emergency
- How to hand express human milk or utilize hands-on pumping
- Maintaining or increasing your milk supply
- Relactation
- Human donor milk

Resources to Support Breastfeeding or Chestfeeding Parents with Lactation During Emergencies

- American Academy of Pediatrics- Infant Nutrition in Disasters and Other Emergencies: Breastfeeding and Other Options (ENG): [DisasterFactSheet6-2020.pdf \(aap.org\)](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)- Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies (ENG/SPAN): <https://www.cdc.gov/infant-feeding-emergencies-toolkit/php/facts.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)- How to Keep Your Breast Pump Kit Clean- The Essentials (ENG/SPAN): <https://www.cdc.gov/hygiene/about/about-breast-pump-hygiene.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)- How to Prepare and Store Powdered Infant Formula (ENG/SPAN): <https://www.cdc.gov/infant-toddler-nutrition/formula-feeding/preparation-and-storage.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)- Proper Storage and Preparation of Breast Milk (ENG, some SPAN resources): https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/breast-milk-preparation-and-storage/handling-breastmilk.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling-breastmilk.htm

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)- Safety Messages for Pregnant, Postpartum, and Breastfeeding Women During Natural Disasters and Severe Weather (ENG): [Safety Messages For Pregnant, Postpartum, and](https://www.cdc.gov/reproductive-health/emergency-preparation-response/safety-messages.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/emergency/safety-messages.htm) https://www.cdc.gov/reproductive-health/emergency-preparation-response/safety-messages.html?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/emergency/safety-messages.htm
- International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA)- Emergency Preparedness Checklist for Breastfeeding (ENG): [Checklists09 PRINT.pdf \(ilca.org\)](https://ilca.org/Checklists09_PRINT.pdf)
- International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA)-Facts About Breastfeeding in an Emergency for Healthcare Workers (ENG): [FACTSforHCP.pdf \(ilca.org\)](https://ilca.org/FACTSforHCP.pdf)
- Kelly Mom- Infant Feeding in Emergencies (MULTILINGUAL): [Infant Feeding in Emergencies • KellyMom.com](https://kellymom.com/infant-feeding-in-emergencies/)
- La Leche League International- Infant Feeding in Emergencies (MULTILINGUAL): <https://lilc.org/breastfeeding-info/infant-feeding-emergencies-multilingual/>*Excellent resource for milk donation, sharing, drip-drop feeding method, hand expression, cup feeding, and relactation.
- Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response (OHSEPR)- Infant Feeding During Disasters (ENG):<https://acf.gov/ohsepr/fact-sheet/infant-feeding-during-disasters>
- UNICEF- Maximizing Breast Milk and Supporting Relactation (ENG): <https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/maximising-breastmilk-and-re-lactation-guidance/>

Resources on Hand Expression

- Droplet- Hand Expression (ENG/SPAN): <https://vimeo.com/291805110?fl=pl&fe=sh>
- Global Health Media Project- Expressing the First Milk (ENG/SPAN): <https://youtu.be/85l3rpsjyC4>
- Global Health Media Project- How to Express Breastmilk (ENG/SPAN): <https://youtu.be/axQi5PqRZ0M>
- Stanford Medicine Newborn Nursery-Hand Expression of Breast Milk (ENG): <https://med.stanford.edu/newborns/professional-education/breastfeeding/hand-expressing-milk.html>
- WIC Breastfeeding Support- Pumping and Hand Expression Basics: <https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/pumping-and-hand-expression-basics>

Resources on Maintaining or Increasing Your Milk Supply

- Acelleron- Power Pumping: How and Why to Do It (ENG): [https://youtu.be/VBLcKs5x -M](https://youtu.be/VBLcKs5x-M)
- Nancy Mohrbacher- ‘The Magic Number’ and Long-Term Milk Production (ENG): <https://nancymohrbacher.com/blogs/news/the-magic-number-and-long-term-milk-production-parts-i-and-ii>
- Stanford Medicine Newborn Nursery- Maximizing Milk Production with Hands-on Pumping (ENG): <https://med.stanford.edu/newborns/professional-education/breastfeeding/maximizing-milk-production.html>
- WIC Breastfeeding Support- Pumping and Hand Expression Basics: <https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/pumping-and-hand-expression-basics>

Supporting WIC Families with Relactation

Relactation is when a parent reestablishes lactation after having stopped breastfeeding or chestfeeding. It should not be offered as an immediate feeding solution. Relactation can be a time consuming, lengthy process, involving nipple stimulation and milk extraction. *The guidance and oversight of at least an IBCLC to monitor the health of the infant is recommended.*

Note: Supplementation with infant formula may be necessary during relactation until the parent is able to produce enough to exclusively feed their infant human milk.

Resources to Support WIC Families with Relactation

- Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM)- Lactation Care for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Question, Plus Parents (ENG):
<https://www.bfmed.org/assets/DOCUMENTS/PROTOCOLS/Protocol%20%2333%20-%20English%20Translation.pdf>
- Breastfeeding Center of Ann Arbor- Relactation Basics for Parents and Professionals (ENG):
<https://bfcaa.com/relactation-basics-for-parents-and-professionals/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)- Supporting Families with Relactation (ENG):
<https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding-special-circumstances/hcp/relactation/>
- Emergency Nutrition Network- Relactation in Infant Feeding Emergencies (ENG):
https://www.enonline.net/sites/default/files/2024-04/annex_viii_re-lactation_hand_expression_and_cup_feeding_a_brief_guide_for_aid_workers.pdf
- Kelly Mom- Relactation and Adoptive Breastfeeding- the Basics (MULTILINGUAL):
<https://kellymom.com/bf/got-milk/relactation/>
- Lactation Education Resources- Professional Handouts, Helping a Parent to Relactate (MULTILINGUAL):
<https://www.lactationtraining.com/resources/handouts-professionals/helping-a-parent-to-relactate/download>
- La Leche League- Relactation (MULTILINGUAL): <https://lila.org/breastfeeding-info/relactation/>
- UNICEF- Maximizing Breast Milk and Re-Lactation Guidance (ENG):
<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/maximising-breastmilk-and-re-lactation-guidance/>
- World Health Organization (WHO)- Relactation: Review of Experience and Recommendations for Practice (ENG): <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-CHS-CAH-98.14>

Information for WIC Families About Human Donor Milk

- WIC and Nevada Medicaid do not offer/cover human donor milk.
- Human donor milk is safe when donors are appropriately screened and safety measures are in place to collect, store and pasteurize the human milk through established commercial milk banks.
- Feeding an infant human milk acquired from the internet, Facebook groups, individuals, etc. may pose significant health risks to infants due to unknown collection, storage, and shipping practices leading to high amounts of bacteria being present in the human milk. In addition, there is no way to verify whether the product received is *actually* human milk without the addition of cow's milk, formula, or other unknown substances which can harm infants.

- A study of potential human milk donors who were thought to be low risk found about 3% of donors tested positive for diseases such as syphilis, HIV, hepatitis B and C, and other viruses. The study demonstrated that if these low-risk potential human milk donors tested positive for the above diseases, then the untested or unscreened human milk donor may present a significant health risk to the infant.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Food and Drug Association (FDA) recommend against feeding infants human milk obtained directly from individuals or the internet due to the lack of adequate screening for infectious disease and the risk of contamination.

Resources for WIC Families on Human Donor Milk

- Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM)- 2017 Position Statement on Informal Breast Milk Sharing for the Term Healthy Infant (ENG):
<https://abm.memberclicks.net/assets/DOCUMENTS/ABM%27s%202017%20Position%20Statement%20on%20Informal%20Breast%20Milk%20Sharing%20for%20the%20Term%20Healthy%20Infant.pdf>
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)- Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk (ENG):
<https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/150/1/e2022057988/188347/Policy-Statement-Breastfeeding-and-the-Use-of>
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)- Donor Human Milk for the High-Risk Infant: Preparation, Safety, and Usage Options in the United States (ENG):
<https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/139/1/e20163440/52000/Donor-Human-Milk-for-the-High-Risk-Infant>
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)-Microbial Contamination of Human Milk Purchased via the Internet (ENG): <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article-abstract/132/5/e1227/31663/Microbial-Contamination-of-Human-Milk-Purchased?redirectedFrom=fulltext>
- Archives of Disease in Childhood, Child Fetal Neonatal Edition- Retrospective Review of Serological Testing of Potential Human Milk Donors (ENG): <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20231217/>
- Food and Drug Association (FDA)- Use of Donor Human Milk (ENG): <https://www.fda.gov/science-research/pediatrics/use-donor-human-milk>
- Geraghty, S. & et al. (2011)-Got Milk? Sharing Human Milk via the Internet (ENG):
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3056026/pdf/phr126000161.pdf>
- Human Milk Banking Association of North America (ENG): <https://www.hmbana.org/>
- Mother's Milk Bank California (ENG): <https://mothersmilk.org/> *Offers phone support in multiple languages when inquiring about human donor milk.