

Milk Lab

This handout describes the role of the milk lab in the NICU.

What is the milk lab?

The milk lab is a place that safely stores and prepares feedings for your baby.

What does the milk lab do?

- Collects and stores human breast milk.
- Measures human breast milk into bottles or syringes.
- Fortifies, or adds nutrients to, human breast milk, if needed.
- Prepares formula feedings.
- Brings prepared human breast milk and formula to patient rooms.

If you are pumping breast milk for your baby during your stay in the NICU, we will give you special barcode labels for each container of breast milk. The milk lab uses a barcode scanning system, so we know how much breast milk you have in the hospital. The system keeps your baby safe by making sure we feed them the correct milk.

The techs from the milk lab will visit your room to pick up fresh breast milk. They will also bring filled bottles or syringes for your baby, if needed. If your baby does not need milk measured out or nutrients added, the milk lab will still visit your room to scan your milk into the system and check the expiration dates. If you have more milk than you need to feed your baby, the milk lab will freeze it. You can thaw and use frozen milk during your stay or take it home with you.

If your baby will use formula, the milk lab will prepare a container with enough formula to last 24 hours and bring it to your baby's room each day. Your nurse will measure out the formula you need for each feeding. Some babies use formulas that do not need to be mixed but come in smaller bottles and are ready to feed.

If you have questions for the milk lab, please let your nurse know.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 7/2020 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#8155.