



USLCA
United States Lactation
Consultant Association

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URGENT CALL FOR HUMAN MILK DONATIONS FOR HAITI INFANTS

The Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA), United States Breastfeeding Committee (USBC), International Lactation Consultant Association/United States Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA/USLCA), and La Leche League International (LLL) are jointly issuing an urgent call for human milk donations for premature infants in Haiti, as well as sick and premature infants in the United States.

This week the first shipment of human milk from mothers in the United States will be shipped to the U.S. Navy Ship “Comfort” stationed outside Haiti. “Comfort” is currently set up with a neonatal intensive care unit and medical personnel to provide urgent care to victims of the earthquake. An International Board Certified Lactation Consultant stationed at the U.S. Navy base in Bethesda, MD is assisting with providing breast pump equipment and supplies to the “Comfort.” Dr. Erika Beard-Irvine, pediatric neonatologist, is on board the “Comfort” to coordinate distribution of the milk to infants in need. HMBANA, USBC, ILCA/USLCA, and LLL are responding to requests to provide milk for both premature infants and at-risk mothers who have recently delivered babies on board the U.S.N.S. Comfort, but an urgent need exists for additional donations.

At the current time, the infrastructure to deliver human milk on land to Haiti infants has not yet been established. As soon as that infrastructure is in place, additional donations will be provided to older infants.

Mothers who are willing to donate human milk should contact their regional Mothers’ Milk Bank of HMBANA. A list of regional milk banks is available at the HMBANA website at www.hmbana.org.

Currently milk banks are already low on donor milk. New milk donations will be used for both Haiti victims as well as to replenish donor supplies to continue to serve sick and premature infants in the U.S. Donor milk provides unique protection for fragile preterm infants. Financial donations are also strongly encouraged to allow HMBANA, a nonprofit organization, to continue serving infants in need.

UNICEF, the World Health Organization, the Emergency Nutrition Network, and medical professionals all recommend that breastfeeding and human milk be used for infants in disasters or emergencies. Human milk is life-saving due to its disease prevention properties. It is safe, clean, and does not depend on water which is often unavailable or contaminated in an emergency. Relief workers, health care providers, and other volunteers are urged to provide support for breastfeeding mothers to enable them to continue breastfeeding, and to assist pregnant and postpartum women in initiating and sustaining breastfeeding.

For more information, contact HMBANA at 408-998-4550 or www.hmbana.org . Additional information can be provided from the United States Breastfeeding Committee at 202-367-1132 (www.usbreastfeeding.org), ILCA/USLCA at 1-800-452-2478 (www.ilca.org or www.uslca.org), or La Leche League at 847-519-7730 (www.llli.org) .