



OhioHealth Media Relations

# News Release

March 3, 2020  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Pam Palm, PIO  
Knox Public Health  
740-399-8002  
ppalm@knoxhealth.com

## **OhioHealth Mothers' Milk Bank** **to Open Milk DropSite in Knox County**

*Grand opening event and milk drive to be held on March 20*

**COLUMBUS, Ohio** – The OhioHealth Mothers' Milk Bank is celebrating the opening of a new milk drop site at Knox Public Health with a grand opening event on Friday, March 20, from 1 – 5 p.m. Located at 11660 Upper Gilchrist Rd in Mount Vernon, Knox Public Health will house a freezer to store donated human milk, which will then be transferred to the milk bank in Columbus at no cost to the donor. The freezer was purchased with funding from Women United, a program of United Way of Knox County.

The OhioHealth Mothers' Milk Bank, under the guidelines of the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA), provides pasteurized human milk to those infants whose mothers are unable to provide milk to nourish their babies. It is one of just 29 milk banks in North America – 26 in the United States and three in Canada.

“We are thrilled to be opening this new milk drop to make donating even easier,” said Chris Smith, RN, outreach coordinator and lactation consultant at the milk bank. “With this new milk drop, approved donors in and around Knox County can conveniently donate their milk. Pasteurized donor milk is liquid gold for babies who need it. In 2019 alone we distributed nearly 376,647 ounces of milk all over the country – that’s about 3,000 gallons! Just one ounce can feed a premature infant for three days, so every little bit helps.”

The Knox County site marks the 11<sup>th</sup> OhioHealth milk drop location in Ohio. The donated milk is distributed throughout North America to babies in need..

“We are very excited about the opening of the Knox County WIC Milk Drop,” said Heidi Myers, a certified lactation counselor who spearheaded the project for the Women, Infants & Children (WIC) program at Knox Public Health. “The drop site will enable us to provide a safe and trouble-free way for nursing mothers to share their milk with medically fragile infants and children.”

The milk bank, which is located in the OhioHealth Eastside Health Center in Columbus, relies on donations from healthy, lactating women who generously provide milk to help other babies. Interested donors are encouraged to email [milkbank@ohiohealth.com](mailto:milkbank@ohiohealth.com) or call (614) 566.0630 to arrange a screening phone interview prior to the event. To become a human milk donor, mothers must take part in a screening process to ensure the quality and safety of the milk. This process includes a phone screening to verify eligibility, completion of a medical and lifestyle history review, a signed medical release from the donor and physician and consent to receive a blood test to screen for HIV, HTLV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and syphilis. The donated milk is pasteurized, frozen and distributed by physician prescription.

### **Benefits of Breast Milk**

Infants benefit greatly from human milk, especially those who are premature, ill, or have life-threatening conditions. Human milk is the ultimate source of nutrients and immune protection for infants. Babies benefit from the active growth hormones, developmental enzymes, infection fighting and immunological factors found in human milk.

Research shows that human milk helps pre-term infants:

- Reach full feeds sooner and need fewer IVs
- Mature their intestines faster
- Spend fewer days in the hospital
- Reduce risk of necrotizing enterocolitis (a potentially fatal bowel infection)
- Reduce risk of sepsis (blood infection) and fewer infections
- Experience long-term IQ advantages over formula-fed infants
- Be healthier as older children and adults

More information about the OhioHealth Mothers’ Milk Bank, including a video, may be found at <https://www.ohiohealth.com/locations/womens-health/mothers-milk-bank/>

### **About OhioHealth**

OhioHealth is a nationally recognized, not-for-profit, charitable, healthcare outreach of the United Methodist Church.

Based in Columbus, Ohio, OhioHealth has been recognized as one of the top five large health systems in America by Truven Health Analytics, an honor it has received six times. It is also

recognized by FORTUNE as one of the “100 Best Companies to Work For” and has been for 13 years in a row, 2007-2019.

Serving its communities since 1891, it is a family of 30,000 associates, physicians and volunteers, and a network of 12 hospitals, 200+ ambulatory sites, hospice, home-health, medical equipment and other health services spanning a 47-county area.

OhioHealth hospitals include OhioHealth Riverside Methodist Hospital, OhioHealth Grant Medical Center, OhioHealth Doctors Hospital, OhioHealth Grady Memorial Hospital, OhioHealth Dublin Methodist Hospital, OhioHealth Hardin Memorial Hospital, OhioHealth Marion General Hospital, OhioHealth O’Bleness Hospital, OhioHealth Mansfield Hospital, OhioHealth Shelby Hospital, OhioHealth Grove City Methodist Hospital and OhioHealth Berger Hospital. For more information, please visit our website at [www.ohiohealth.com](http://www.ohiohealth.com)

### **About Knox Health**

Knox Public Health is a nationally accredited agency serving Knox County, Ohio for more than 100 years. The agency is committed to the health of the community by promoting healthy lifestyles, preventing illness, and protecting the environment. It strives to be a leader in public health by addressing community issues through proactive and innovative solutions so that all residents may experience optimal health and a safe environment.

Programs and services include immunizations for adults and children; Women, Infants and Children (WIC); investigation of communicable disease; school nursing; service coordination for children with special needs; licensing, inspection and enforcement for food service operations, water and sewage systems, pools, spas and tattoo parlors; vector control and surveillance; tobacco cessation, Drug Free Communities, child car seat distribution and education; Creating Healthy Communities; and certified birth and death records. The Knox County Community Health Center, a federally qualified health center (FQHC) offering medical, dental and mental health services is also part of the agency. For more information, please visit our website at [www.knoxhealth.com](http://www.knoxhealth.com)