



## Breast Milk Banks

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Breast Milk Banks are established under “**National Guidelines on Establishment of Lactation Management Centres in Public Health Facilities**” by the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**.

- Under the guidelines, Breast Milk Banks follow a structural hierarchy, which can be simplified as:
  - **Comprehensive Lactation Management Centre**  
It is established for the purpose of **collecting, screening, processing, storing and distributing** donor human milk at Government Medical Colleges or District Hospitals with **high delivery load** and **availability** of newborn treatment units.
  - **Lactation Management Unit**  
It has a **collection and storage facility** of **mother’s own milk** in District Hospital/Sub-district Hospital with at least **12 beds**.
  - **Lactation Support Units**
    - These are established at **all delivery points** to provide breastfeeding support, lactation counselling and **Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC)** support to mothers.
    - KMC is a method of care for preterm infants. The method involves infants being carried, usually by the mother, with skin-to-skin contact.
- The first Breast Milk Bank of India was established in **1989 at Mumbai**.

## Importance of Breastfeeding

- Breast milk is the **optimum source of nutrition** for the **first six months** of life of an infant.
- It prevents infections like diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections in early infancy and thus **reduces infant mortality**.
- It **decreases** the risk of mothers developing breast cancer, ovarian cancer, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease.

- It also protects infants from obesity-related illnesses, diabetes and increases IQ.

## Initiatives By Indian Government

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- **MAA - "Mothers Absolute Affection"**

MAA is a nationwide programme of the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** to promote breastfeeding.

- **Vatsalya – Maatri Amrit Kosh**

Vatsalya, a **National Human Milk Bank** and Lactation Counselling Centre has been established in collaboration with the Norwegian government.

**Source: PIB**