



**News Release**  
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## **Baptist Health Opens UAMS Milk Bank Depot in Fort Smith**

LITTLE ROCK — Baptist Health, in support of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) Milk Bank, has opened a milk depot at its medical center in Fort Smith.

The Fort Smith Baptist Health Milk Depot is a designated space for women to donate milk, which will be sent to the UAMS Milk Bank for screening, pasteurization and nutritional analysis. After processing milk will be sent, according to need, to hospitals throughout Arkansas.

“It's proven that breast milk provides babies with ideal nutrition to support growth and development, as well as reduces their risk of both long-term and short-term illnesses,” said Jeff Carrier, FACHE, president of the Baptist Health Western Region. “We focus heavily on supporting mothers who choose to breastfeed with both inpatient and outpatient lactation services, so partnering with UAMS Milk Bank is just one more way we can support moms and babies across the state.”

The Fort Smith Baptist Health Milk Depot is located at 1500 Dodson Ave., Suite 140, in Fort Smith, and is open Monday-Friday, 1-4 p.m., and can be contacted at 479-441-5694.

The UAMS Milk Bank, the first facility of its kind in Arkansas, focuses on the health of mothers and newborns in Arkansas through encouragement and support of breastfeeding. The new milk bank helps ensure a ready supply of donor milk for sick and vulnerable infants in neonatal intensive care units (NICU) around the state, shortening the time it takes for regional hospitals to receive critical milk supplies and improving outcomes for babies.

“The UAMS Milk Bank is proud to open a new drop-off site at Baptist Health Fort Smith. Promoting and supporting breastfeeding in our communities is important to the health of the entire community and we are thrilled to be able to send Arkansas’ mother’s milk back to the sick and vulnerable infants in Arkansas NICUs around our state,” said

Misty L. Virmani, M.D., executive medical director of the UAMS Milk Bank, associate professor of pediatrics and neonatology and director of breastfeeding medicine.

“Depots like the new one in Fort Smith help the community see how important it is to support our mothers who are out there working hard to breastfeed their own babies and generously giving their extra milk to make sure other babies are equally safe and healthy,” she added. “Our thanks go out to all of our community members who help us in our mission to provide safe feedings for hospitalized newborns and to support breastfeeding advocacy in our state.”

Previously, Arkansas hospitals relied on donor milk purchased from milk banks in Texas, Michigan, Illinois and Oklahoma, costing more than \$1 million a year. In 2021, the Arkansas Legislature passed Act 225 establishing the creation of the milk bank and a special fund to help support the bank.

For information about how to donate milk to the UAMS Milk Bank, please visit [uamshealth.com/uams-milk-bank](https://uamshealth.com/uams-milk-bank). To contact the Milk Bank, please call 501-686-5355 or email [milkbank@uams.edu](mailto:milkbank@uams.edu).

### **About Baptist Health**

For more than a century, Baptist Health has delivered All Our Best in health care through Christian compassion and innovative services. Baptist Health is Arkansas’ most comprehensive health care organization with more than 250 points of access that include 11 hospitals; urgent care centers; a senior living community; over 100 primary and specialty care clinics; a college with studies in nursing and allied health; and a graduate residency program. It is also the largest private not-for-profit health care organization based in Arkansas, providing care through the support of approximately 11,000 employees, groundbreaking treatments, renowned physicians and community outreach programs. For more information about Baptist Health, visit [Baptist-Health.com](https://Baptist-Health.com), call Baptist Health HealthLine at 1-888-BAPTIST or download the myBaptistHealth app.

### **About UAMS**

UAMS is the state's only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; a hospital; a main campus in Little Rock; a Northwest Arkansas regional campus in Fayetteville; a statewide network of regional campuses; and seven institutes: the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute, Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, Psychiatric Research Institute, Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, Translational Research Institute, Institute for Digital Health & Innovation and the Institute for Community Health Innovation. UAMS includes UAMS Health, a statewide health system that encompasses all of UAMS' clinical enterprise. UAMS is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. UAMS has 3,275 students, 890 medical residents and fellows, and five dental residents. It is the state's largest public employer with more than 12,000 employees, including 1,200 physicians who provide care to patients at UAMS, its regional campuses, Arkansas Children's, the VA Medical Center and Baptist Health. Visit [www.uams.edu](https://www.uams.edu) or [www.uamshealth.com](https://www.uamshealth.com). Find us on [Facebook](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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