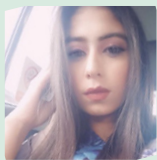


A MILK TECHNICIAN



Aqsa Mahmood ANutr

Aqsa Mahmood is a Registered Associated Nutritionist with the AfN. She graduated from the University of Westminster in November 2019 with a BSc in Human Nutrition. She is currently working with the NHS as a milk technician at Royal Brompton Hospital, producing formula milk for children with heart and lung conditions.

First and foremost, what is a milk technician? The milk technician's role is within the Special Feed Unit (SFU) of a hospital to prepare and distribute human milk and formula to infants. This role includes measuring out each feed by powder weight, preparing the feeds, labelling each feed, ensuring correct storage and stock of milk and formula and, in special cases, monitoring additives when required.

HYGIENE REGIMEN

My day starts by prepping the SFU to ensure it's clean and ready for feed preparation. Room and freezer temperatures are noted to ensure they are functioning correctly. The crockery and cutlery used to prepare the feeds, such as jugs, spoons and balloon whisks, are taken to the kitchen to ensure they are decontaminated and safe for milk preparation. Hands are washed using the designated sink, as per the Trust's hand hygiene policy.

Clean gloves, apron and hair net are worn to prevent contamination. The workspace is then cleaned with Clinell wipes. The apron and gloves are discarded, and hands are washed again. A new apron is then worn and the decontaminated feed preparation equipment is then collected from the kitchen. The kettle is set to boil using fresh water and left to cool to a minimum temperature of 70C, ensuring that the water is decontaminated and safe to use.

PREPARING THE FEEDS

Dietitians are responsible for prescribing and updating feeds for a patient on a milk bottle system called 'Dendrite'. Each feed prescription is then checked on the system. At this point, it is crucial to check and review dates to ensure correct feeds for the day are prepared.

The label for the feed is prepared, printed out and stuck onto the bottle ready for preparation. If the milk tin is being used for the first time, the scoop is discarded immediately. The expiry date of the tin is also checked. If the tin

has been open for over a month, it is discarded immediately.

Next, we must calculate how much powder is required for the feed and we do this by using the formula below:

$$\% \text{ concentration of feed} \div 100 \times \text{total 24hr feed volume}$$

The jug is placed on the scale and the scale calibrated to zero. The powder is then weighed carefully into the jug using a spoon and the required volume of water is added to the jug. At this point, it is important to whisk carefully to ensure no powder is remaining. The batch feed is distributed amongst the labelled bottles to the amount required for the feed. These steps are repeated for the rest of the feeds. It is essential that the work surface is cleaned, PPE is changed and hands are washed between each feed preparation to avoid cross contamination. The prepared feeds are then placed in the blast chiller within 30 minutes of preparation and cooled to $\leq 4\text{C}$ as per hospital guidelines.

DISTRIBUTION OF FEEDS

Once the blast chiller cycle has finished, the temperature is checked. If the temperature is $\geq 4\text{C}$, the feeds must remain in the blast chiller for another cycle, to ensure they reach the desired cooling temperature. The feeds are transferred from the blast chiller to the feed trolley and then placed in the fridge on the ward. All expired feeds that have not been used for the previous 24 hours are discarded. The freezer and fridge temperatures are logged, surfaces are cleaned and the feed preparation



Expressed breast milk (EBM) must be checked to see if labelled clearly and stored safely as it is human milk and unsafe storage can cause contamination.

equipment is washed and ready to be sent to the kitchen the following day. The room is then clean and safe to use.

Apart from preparing feeds, the milk technician role also ensures that stock is maintained and milk tins are stored safely. Expressed breast milk (EBM) must be checked to see if labelled clearly and stored safely as it

is human milk and unsafe storage can cause contamination.

This is what a typical day looks like in the life of a milk technician. However, certain days may vary due to the number of feeds and stock checks, but it's an adventure of a job filled with joy, knowing that little ones are being provided with safe appropriate feeds for their needs.



NETWORK HEALTH DIGEST

eArticles with CPD



- Continuing professional development
- Answer questions
- Download & keep for your files

Visit NHDmag.co.uk

