Android, Bluetooth Help Keep Donated Breast Milk Safe

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Researchers have developed a low cost system to make donated breast milk safe to drink, New Scientist reports. Vats and associated equipment can cost tens of thousands of dollars and pasteurize high volumes. Teams from the University of Washington in Seattle and the Nelson Mandela School of Medicine at the University of KwaZulu Natal in Durban have developed a system that costs about $800 and pasteurizes three bottles of breast milk in 20 minutes. Using wireless Bluetooth signaling, a sensor sends the temperature of the water bath heating the bottles to an app on an Android smartphone. The app talks the user through every step of the process. Although HIV-positive mothers can breast-feed safely if they're on antiretroviral treatment, many of them in South Africa still rely on donated breast milk because of their fear of transmitting the virus. Until 2009, HIV-positive South African mothers were discouraged from breast-feeding.

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