

Safe Storage of Expressed Breast Milk



Storing breast milk after expressing:

- Use breast milk storage bags or clean food-grade containers with tight fitting lids made of glass or plastic to store expressed breast milk.
 - Avoid bottles with the recycle symbol number 7, which indicates that the container may be made of a BPA-containing plastic.
- Never store breast milk in disposable bottle liners or plastic bags that are not intended for storing breast milk.
- Freshly expressed or pumped milk can be stored at:
 - Room temperature (77°F or colder) for up to 4 hours.
 - In the refrigerator for up to 4 days.
 - In the freezer for up to 6 months.
 - In a deep freezer for up to 12 months.

Storage tips:

- Clearly label the breast milk with the date it was expressed.
- Do not store breast milk in the door of the refrigerator or freezer. This will help protect the breast milk from temperature changes from the door opening and closing.
- If you don't think you will use freshly expressed breast milk within 4 days, freeze it right away. This will help to protect the quality of the breast milk.
- Freeze breast milk in small amounts of 2 to 4 ounces (or the amount that will be offered at one feeding) to avoid wasting breast milk that might not be finished.
- When freezing breast milk, leave about an inch of space at the top of the container because breast milk expands as it freezes.
- If you will be delivering breast milk to a childcare provider, clearly label the container with the child's name and talk to your childcare provider about other requirements they might have for labeling and storing breast milk.
- Breast milk can be stored in an insulated cooler bag with frozen ice packs for up to 24 hours when you are traveling. Once you arrive at your destination, milk should be used right away, stored in the refrigerator, or frozen.

Safe Thawing of Breast Milk:

- Always thaw the oldest breast milk first. Remember first in, first out. Over time, the quality of breast milk can decrease.
- There are several ways to thaw your breast milk:
 - In the refrigerator overnight.
 - Set in a container of warm or lukewarm water.
 - Under lukewarm running water.
- Never thaw or heat breast milk in a microwave. Microwaving can destroy nutrients in breast milk and create hot spots, which can burn a baby's mouth.
- Use breast milk within 24 hours of thawing in the refrigerator (this means from the time it is no longer frozen or completely thawed, not from the time when you took it out of the freezer).
- Once breast milk is brought to room temperature or warmed after storing in the refrigerator or freezer, it should be used within 2 hours.
- Never refreeze breast milk once it has been thawed.