



## BREASTFEEDING BABIES AND CHILDREN

### Storing expressed breastmilk

These guidelines are to be used for the healthy babies who were born at term. If your baby is hospitalized, please check with the hospital for guidelines regarding expressing and storing breastmilk.

#### **Types of storage containers:**

- Glass or hard plastic containers with a tight lid (e.g. small bottle with a lid)
- Breastmilk freezer bags
- If you use bottle liner bags – use two bags and double bag as the plastic is thin

#### **How to clean the storage container:**

- Wash the containers in hot soapy water and rinse well with hot water
- Let the containers air dry
- If breastmilk freezer bags are being used, they are sterilized and ready to use. They are for one time use only and cannot be re-used

#### **When storing breastmilk:**

- Write the date and the time expressed on the container
- Store breastmilk in small portions (2-4 oz) to prevent wasting excess milk
- Cool freshly expressed milk in the fridge before adding it to already cooled or frozen milk
- If combining breastmilk for storage, add a smaller amount of cooled milk to frozen milk
- Leave space at the top of the container when freezing as milk will expand

#### **Using stored breastmilk:**

- Use the oldest breastmilk first
- If your baby is only getting expressed breastmilk and not breastfeeding, give fresh breastmilk as much as possible rather than stored breastmilk

You've got what it takes!

For more information call **Health Connection** at 1-800-361-5653



## Thawing breastmilk:

Options to thaw:

- Leave container in the refrigerator for 4 hours
- Hold container under cool running water then warm water to finish thawing
- Do not thaw at room temperature

Options to warm:

- Warm breastmilk by placing container in a bowl of very warm water
- Do not heat on the stove or in the microwave as this may create hot spots or damage the nutrients in the milk

## Before using:

- Swirl container to re-mix the fat into the breastmilk
- Test the temperature before using it. It should feel slightly warm but not hot
- Use warmed breastmilk within 1 hour and throw out any leftover
- Thawed breastmilk may taste or smell different than fresh, but it is still good

## Breastmilk storage guidelines

	Location	Temperature	Duration	Comments
Freshly expressed breastmilk	Countertop, table	Room temperature (up to 25°C/77°F)	6 to 8 hours	Containers should be covered and kept as cool as possible
	Insulated cooler bag	-15°C/5°F to 4°C/40°F	24 hours	Keep ice packs in contact with milk containers at all times, limit opening cooler bag
	Refrigerator	4°C/40°F	8 days	Store milk in the back of the main body of the refrigerator
Freshly expressed or refrigerated breastmilk	Freezer compartment of a refrigerator	-15°C/5°F	2 weeks	Store milk toward the back of the freezer where temperature is most constant. Milk stored for longer durations in the ranges listed is safe, but some of the lipids in the milk undergo degradation resulting in lower quality.
	Freezer compartment of refrigerator with separate doors	-18°C/0°F	3 to 6 months	
	Chest or upright deep freezer	-20°C/-4°F	6 to 12 months	
Thawed breastmilk	Countertop, table	Room temperature (up to 25°C/77°F)	Should not be left out on counter	Should not be warmed and then re-stored in the refrigerator. Do not re-freeze thawed breastmilk.
	Refrigerator	4°C/40°F	24 hours	
References: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Breastfeeding Answer Book, LLLI Recommendations: Handling Breastmilk				

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