

Handling Breast Milk

Breast Milk Storage Guidelines					
	Room Temp	Cooler Bag with Ice Packs	Refrigerator	Freezer	Deep Freezer
Freshly expressed breast milk	3 – 4 hours ideal*	24 hours	5 days	Up to 6 months	Up to 12 months
Thawed breast milk	2 – 3 hours		24 hours	Do not refreeze	Do not refreeze

*Up to 8 hours if collected under very clean conditions; seal containers tightly and keep as cool as possible. Keep room temperature under 85°.

Use oldest unexpired fresh breast milk first.

Do not reuse breast milk from a bottle that a baby has drunk from.

Source: Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine. 2010. ABM Clinical Protocol #8: Human Milk Storage. *Breastfeeding Medicine*, 5:3.

Breast milk is a complex food containing many live cells—it's important to handle it correctly to prevent damaging it.

Wash hands thoroughly before preparing bottles or feeding infants.

To thaw frozen breast milk:

- Place in the refrigerator overnight
- Hold under cool or room temperature running water
- Place the container in a bowl of cool or room temperature running water
- Do not use a microwave, crock pot, or pan on the stove
- Gently swirl breast milk to recombine—do not shake

To warm refrigerated breast milk:

- Place the container in a bowl of warm (not hot) water
- Place the container under warm (not hot) running water
- Do not allow the breast milk to go above body temperature (98.6°)
- Do not use a microwave, crock pot, or pan on the stove
- Gently swirl breast milk to recombine—do not shake