

Human Milk Guidelines for The Healthy, Term Infant/Child

St. Cloud Hospital Breastfeeding Helpline: 320-251-2700, ext. 52311

Human milk storage

(Guidelines from The Academy of
Breastfeeding Medicine)

FRESHLY EXPRESSED MILK	TEMPERATURE	MAXIMUM STORAGE TIME	COMMENTS
Room temperature	60-85°F (16-29°C)	4 hours (optimal) 6-8 hours (acceptable under very clean conditions)	Cover containers and keep as cool as possible. Chill or refrigerate as soon as you are able if you do not use milk during timeframe noted.
Insulated cooler bag with ice packs	59°F (15°C)	24 hours	Keep ice packs in contact with milk containers at all times. Limit opening cooler bag.
REFRIGERATED MILK	TEMPERATURE	STORAGE TIME	COMMENTS
Refrigerator (fresh milk)	39.2°F (~4°C)	96 hours or 4 days (optimal) 5-8 days (under very clean conditions)	Store milk in the back of the main body of the refrigerator.
Refrigerator (previously frozen, thawed milk)	39.2°F (~4°C)	24 hours	Store milk in the back of the main body of the refrigerator.
FROZEN MILK	TEMPERATURE	STORAGE TIME	COMMENTS
Freezer	Less than 24.8°F (<-4°C)	9 months	Store milk toward the back of the freezer, where temperature is most constant.

Storing milk

- Containers can be glass, hard plastic or human milk storage bags. Avoid containers with bisphenol A (BPA).
- Store milk in 1-4 ounce portions for easier thawing and warming and to avoid waste.
- Label all stored containers of milk with the date and time of milk expression as well as name of child if used in a childcare setting.
- After a container is filled with milk, leave space at the top of the container to allow for expansion with freezing.
- You may combine milk from different pumping sessions into one container. When labeling, use the date of first milk expressed when adding new milk. Avoid adding warm milk to a container of refrigerated or frozen milk. Cool the new milk before combining.
- Place newest frozen milk in the back of the freezer.

Transporting milk

- Pack milk in an insulated cooler with ice or freezer gel packs.

Thawing and warming milk

- Thaw frozen milk in the refrigerator. This process takes about 12 hours. If necessary, thaw rapidly by holding container under warm running water, placing in a bowl of warm water (taking care not to completely submerge) or using a waterless warmer.
- DO NOT heat milk in a microwave. Excessive heat destroys valuable nutritional properties and creates hot spots in the milk that could burn your child's mouth.
- Shake gently before feeding to remix the creamy portion that separates during storage.

Using stored milk

- Fresh milk is better than frozen milk. Use the oldest milk in the refrigerator or freezer first.
- Children may drink thawed milk at a variety of temperatures from cool to warm, depending on preference.
- Any milk brought to room temperature, use within 2 hours.
- Discard within 1 hour any milk used for a feeding that comes in contact with your child's mouth.
- Once milk is thawed (no ice crystals), do NOT refreeze.

Pumping tips

- Before every milk expression, wash your hands with soap and water or a waterless hand cleanser, if hands don't appear dirty.
- Find a relaxing position. Apply warm, moist packs to breasts and massage for several minutes before pumping.
- If your child is not going to breast or if you have milk supply concerns, strive to pump at least 8 times (10-12 times is better) in a 24-hour period for 15-30 minutes each, with at least one nighttime pumping between midnight and 6 a.m. Once milk supply is established, you may be able to decrease pumping frequency. Talk to your lactation consultant or nurse for guidance.
- Double pumping (pumping both breasts at the same time) in combination with breast massage and hand expression yields higher volumes of milk and fat.
- Pumping should not be painful. Adjust breast pump suction to highest comfortable setting. Ensure the breast shields are the correct size. Talk to your nurse or lactation consultant for guidance.

Cleaning pump equipment

- After each use, wash with hot soapy water any milk collection equipment that comes in contact with milk (does not include tubing), rinse well and air dry. Do not place pump parts directly in the sink. Use a separate, clean wash basin just for infant feeding items.
- Sanitize milk collection equipment once daily by using a microwave steam bag specifically for breast pump parts, by boiling in water for 15-20 minutes, or by using a dishwasher with a sanitize setting.