

Storing breastmilk

Collecting

Good hygiene:

- Wash your hands before you collect your milk.
- Whatever is used for collecting or storing milk should be washed in hot soapy water and then rinsed.
- If your baby is younger than three months the equipment should be sterilised as well.
- You can sterilize equipment by boiling in water for five minutes, or by using a sterilising solution.
- Use a fresh container each time you collect milk.

Storage

Room: 4 hours

- Cover it, and keep it cool if you can.

Coolie Bag: 24 hours

- Have milk containers in contact with frozen packs.

Fridge: 2 days

- The back of the fridge is cooler.

Freezer:

- 2 weeks in freezer box in fridge.
- 3-6 months in separate door fridge/freezer.
- 6-12 months in stand-alone deep freeze.

(These periods of time are given because there are no studies on the quality if kept longer).

Storage containers

- Use plastic or glass containers with an airtight lid or seal.
- Label the container and put the date and time collected.

- You can mix containers of chilled milk together if you want, but it is good to store milk in small amounts to avoid waste later.

Thawing

- Use the oldest milk first.
- Milk can be thawed in the fridge or by putting the container in warm water.
- Don't use the microwave because it destroys some of the immune cells, and heats things unevenly.

Warming

- The milk can be warmed by placing the container in hot water
- The milk should be swirled to mix the cream, that will have risen to the top, back in. It will also even out the temperature.
- A few drops on the inside of your wrist will give you an idea of the temperature. Near to body temperature is good.

Feeding

- Whatever is used for feeding milk should be washed in hot soapy water and then rinsed.
- If your baby is younger than three months the equipment should be sterilised as well.
- You can sterilize equipment by boiling in water for five minutes, or by using a sterilising solution.
- It is thought best if left over milk is discarded after a couple of hours (but there have been no studies done).

References:

The Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine Protocol Committee, ABM Clinical Protocol #8: Human Milk Storage Information for Home Use for Full-Term Infants (Original Protocol March 2004; Revision #1 March 2010), DOI: 10.1089=bfm.2010.9988

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