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


Capital and Coast District Health Board, Expressing and Storing Breastmilk, June 2015, retrieved from http://www.healthpoint.co.nz/download,507566.do

Auckland District Health Board National Women’s Health, Women’s Health Collecting Colostrum during Pregnancy and Storing, Freezing and Transport of Expressed Breast Milk (EBM), retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/h8klfl