

# 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 (or washed in a dishwasher). Then air dry or use a paper towel.
- Use a fresh container each time you collect milk.

## Storage

Room: 4 hours. (Up to 8 hours is ok under very clean conditions).

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

Coolie Bag: 24 hours

- Have milk containers in contact with frozen packs.

Fridge: 2 days. (Up to 8 days is ok under very clean conditions).

- The back of the fridge is cooler.

Freezer:

- 2 weeks in freezer box in fridge.
- 12 months in freezer.

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

## Sterilising

Sterilising of all equipment is recommended if you or your baby have a thrush infection, or your baby is premature. Sterilising of all equipment may also be advisable if:

- your baby is unwell or family members are unwell.
- your baby's immune system is compromised by an alteration in gut flora e.g. has been fed infant formula in the last month.
- you are not staying in your own home environment e.g. motel, aunt's house, hospital.

Sterilising of all equipment is necessary if using infant formula (at least until after 3 months of age).

## 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 combine milk from different pumps together if you want (It is fine to add fresh expressed milk to cold stored breastmilk over a 24hour period), 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 (or washed in a dishwasher). Then air dry or use a paper towel.
- If your baby is younger than three months the equipment should be sterilised as well.
- 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, Revised 2017 (Original Protocol March 2004; Revision #1 March 2010), DOI: 10.1089/bfm.2017.29047.aje

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