

Let's Talk About...



Storing breastmilk

If you plan on being away from your baby for a feeding, you can begin collecting extra breastmilk ahead of time. This can be done in a number of ways. Some women choose to use a breastpump. Others find it easier to get milk by hand, called hand expressing. It is generally best to collect at a time when your breasts are fuller than usual and you feel like there is extra milk. Extra milk can be collected right after your baby has finished breastfeeding or during a feeding from the opposite breast.

Whether you have chosen to hand express or use a breastpump, remember to wash your hands with soap and water first. Also be sure your milk container has been washed in hot soapy water (or in the dishwasher) and rinsed well.

The information below on storing milk is recommended by the Human Milk Banking Association of North America.

Breastmilk

Your milk will look golden in color during the first few days after your baby is born. Then the color changes to white. You will notice it is very watery with a thin layer of cream at the top. Don't let this thin appearance fool you. Mother's milk does not look like cow's milk or formula. It is packed with everything your baby needs to grow and provides protection from infection too.

Breastpumps

There are a wide variety of breastpumps available. They range from simple handpumps to deluxe electric pumps that can be purchased or rented. What you choose may depend on the quality you would like and how often you will

use it. If you will be away from your baby often, it is wise to purchase or rent a high quality pump. This is the most effective way to keep up a good milk supply. Many lactation consultants will carry a variety of excellent breastpump choices. To check if there is one in your area, look in the yellow pages under the heading of "Breastfeeding."

Containers

- Use hard plastic baby bottles or glass bottles. Bags made especially for storing breastmilk are also a good choice. Thin plastic bags such as Playtex® Nurser bags or Ziplock® bags can be used, but be careful. Because freezer odors can seep into the milk through the thin plastic and water can evaporate out of the milk, it is best to store bags of milk in a hard plastic container inside your freezer.
- Always label the container with your baby's name, the date, and amount of milk inside.
- Milk expands when frozen, so leave some room at the top.
- Seal bottles with a screw-on lid, not a bottle nipple.

Storing milk

- Milk can be kept at room temperature for 4 hours.
- Breastmilk can be kept in your refrigerator for 3 days. Always place it in the back area of your refrigerator or freezer, not in the door.
- Stored breastmilk will last for 3-4 months in your freezer or up to 1 year in a deep freezer.

- Never add warm milk to milk that is already cold. You can chill separate pumpings and then add them together.
- Chilled milk can be added to milk that is frozen.

Warming up milk

- Always use the oldest milk first.
- You can defrost or warm it by placing the container in warm (not too hot) tap water.
- You can allow 12 hours to slowly defrost milk in the refrigerator.
- Never use a microwave to thaw or warm milk.
- Shake gently to blend in the fat layer.
- Once thawed, breastmilk should be used within 24 hours.
- Do not refreeze thawed milk.
- If your baby does not finish the bottle of breastmilk, the remaining milk should be thrown out.

For questions about medicines, call the Pregnancy Riskline at 1-801-328-2229



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