

# Breast Milk Pumping and Storage

If you plan on being away from your baby for a feeding, you can begin collecting extra breast milk ahead of time. This can be done in several ways.

Some women choose to use a breast pump. 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 breast pump, 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 based on recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

## Breast milk

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 infections too.

## Breast pumps

There are a wide variety of breast pumps available. They range from simple hand pumps to deluxe electric pumps that can be purchased or rented. (Most insurance companies cover the cost of the pump.) 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.



## Containers

- Use hard plastic baby bottles, glass bottles, or bags made for storing breast milk.
- Breast milk expands when frozen, so leave some room at the top.
- Always label the container with your baby's name, the date, and amount of milk inside.
- Use milk with the oldest date first.
- Seal bottles with a screw-on lid, not a bottle nipple.

## Preparation

- Wash hands before expressing or handling breast milk.
- Do not add fresh milk to already frozen milk within a storage container.
- Never add warm breast milk to breast milk that is already cold.

## Storing milk

- Breast milk can be kept at room temperature for 4 hours.
- Breast milk can be kept in your refrigerator for 5 days. Always place it in the back area of your refrigerator or freezer, not in the door.
- Stored breast milk will last for 3 to 6 months in an upright freezer or up to 1 year in a deep freezer.
- As time permits, thaw frozen breast milk by transferring it to the refrigerator for thawing or by swirling it in a bowl of warm water.
- Do not use a microwave to thaw or heat bottles or bags of breast milk.
- Do not save breast milk from a used bottle for use at another feeding.
- Do not refreeze breast milk once it has been thawed.



## Need help or have questions?

### Enteral Feeding Team

- (385) 887-7356

### Intermountain Homecare Main Number

- (385) 887-6000
- (800) 527-1118

Many lactation consultants will carry a variety of excellent breast pump choices. Discuss options with your lactation expert or healthcare provider.

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