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Guidelines for Storing Pumped Breast Milk

Your milk is a living substance. It is essential to store your expressed (pumped) milk properly to maximize its nutritional and anti-infective qualities. Human milk actually has anti-bacterial properties that help it to stay fresh. Giving your baby the freshest milk you have pumped ensures its high quality.

Storing milk in 2-4 ounce amounts may reduce waste. Refrigerated milk has more anti-infective properties than frozen milk. Cool milk in refrigerator before adding to frozen milk.

Human milk can be stored

- at room temperature (66-72°F, 19-22°C) for up to 10 hours
- in a refrigerator (32-39°F, 0-4°C) for up to 8 days
- in a freezer compartment inside a refrigerator (variable temperature due to the door opening frequently) for up to 2 weeks
- in a freezer compartment with a separate door (variable temperature due to the door opening frequently) for up to 3 to 4 months.
- in a separate deep freeze (0°F, -19°C) for up to 6 months or longer.

Refrigerated or frozen milk may be stored in:

- hard-sided plastic or glass containers with well-fitting tops
- freezer milk bags that are designed for storing human milk

Disposable bottle liners are not recommended.

Thaw and/or heat under warm, running water.

Do not bring temperature of milk to boiling point.

Gently swirl milk before testing the temperature. Swirling will also redistribute the cream into the milk. (It is normal for stored milk to separate into a cream and milk layer.)

Do not use a microwave oven to heat human milk.

If milk has been frozen and thawed, it can be refrigerated for up to 24 hours for later use. It should not be refrozen.

