

# Breastmilk Storage

## Handling and Pumping Guidelines

HUMAN MILK STORAGE – QUICK REFERENCE CARD		
	Temperature	Storage Time
<b>Freshly expressed milk</b>		
Warm room	80-90°F / 27-32°C	3-4 hours
Room temperature	61-79°F / 16-26°C	4-8 hours (ideal: 3-4 hours)
Insulated cooler / ice packs	59°F / 15°C	24 hours
<b>Refrigerated Milk</b> (Store at back, away from door)		
Refrigerator (fresh milk)	32-39°F / 0-4°C	3-8 days (ideal: 72 hours)
Refrigerator (thawed milk)	32-39°F / 0-4°C	24 hours
<b>Frozen Milk</b> (Do not refreeze! Store at back, away from door/sides)		
Freezer compartment inside refrigerator (older-style)	Varies	2 weeks
Self-contained freezer unit of a refrigerator/freezer	<39°F / <4°C	6 months
Separate deep freeze	0°F / -18°C	12 months (ideal: 6 months)
<i>These guidelines are for milk expressed for a full-term healthy baby. If baby is seriously ill and/or hospitalized, discuss storage guidelines with baby's doctor.</i>		
<p>To avoid waste and for easier thawing and warming, store milk in 1-4 oz. portions. Date milk before storing. Milk from different pumping sessions/days may be combined in one container – use the date of the first milk expressed. Avoid adding warm milk to a container of previously refrigerated or frozen milk – cool the new milk before combining. Breastmilk is not spoiled unless it smells bad or tastes sour.</p> <p><b>To thaw milk:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thaw slowly in the refrigerator (this takes about 12 hours – try putting it in the fridge the night before you need it). Avoid letting milk sit out at room temperature to thaw.</li> <li>• For quicker thawing, hold container under running water – start cool and gradually increase temperature.</li> </ul> <p>Previously frozen milk may be kept in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours after it has finished thawing. <b>Do not refreeze.</b></p> <p><b>To warm milk:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heat water in a cup or other small container, then place frozen milk in the water to warm; or</li> <li>• Use a bottle warmer.</li> <li>• <b>NEVER microwave human milk or heat it directly on the stove.</b></li> </ul> <p>The cream will rise to the top of the milk during storage. Gently swirl milk (do not shake) to mix before checking temperature and offering to baby.</p> <p><b>If baby does not finish milk at one feeding,</b> it is probably safe to refrigerate and offer within 1-2 hours before it is discarded.</p>		