

Preparing and Storing Breastmilk

Tips for Childcare Providers

It is important that you properly store and handle breastmilk to keep it from spoiling

Ask mothers to follow these steps at home:

- Pump breastmilk into either a bottle or special breastmilk collection bag. Fill the container with the amount of breastmilk the baby usually drinks at one feeding.
- Label the container with:
 - Baby's name
 - Date and time that the breastmilk was pumped
- Store the breastmilk in the refrigerator or freezer right after it is pumped.
- Bring containers of fresh or frozen breastmilk to the childcare center in a cooler with an ice pack to keep it cold.

Follow these steps yourself when storing breastmilk:

Fresh Breastmilk (breastmilk that has never been frozen):

- Check that each container is labeled with the baby's name and the date the breastmilk was pumped. Never accept a container without a label.
- Refrigerate breastmilk immediately. Never allow breastmilk to stand at room temperature.
- Throw out breastmilk that has been in the refrigerator for more than 3 days.

Frozen Breastmilk:

- Check that each container is labeled with the baby's name and the date the breastmilk was pumped. Never accept a container without a label.
- Store frozen breastmilk in the back of the freezer. Never store breastmilk on the freezer door or in the front of the freezer.
- Keep frozen breastmilk in the freezer until it is needed for feeding. Never allow breastmilk to stand at room temperature.
- Throw out breastmilk that has been in the freezer for 3 months.

Thawing frozen breastmilk

Tips for thawing frozen breastmilk:

- Never thaw breastmilk on the stove or in a microwave. Heating breastmilk in these ways destroys important nutrients that protect a baby's health.
- Thawed breastmilk may be kept in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours.
- Never refreeze thawed breastmilk.

There are three different ways to thaw frozen breastmilk:

Method 1

Let breastmilk thaw in the refrigerator until you are ready to use it.

Method 2

Hold the container of breastmilk under warm running water until the milk thaws and reaches room temperature.

Method 3

Put the container of frozen breastmilk into warm water until the milk thaws and reaches room temperature.

Feeding tips

- Use oldest breastmilk first.
- Shake the bottle to mix the breastmilk.
- Follow the baby's lead in the amount of breastmilk to feed. Stop feeding the baby when he or she loses interest.
- Throw away any breastmilk left in the bottle after the feeding.
- Send empty bottles home each day with parents for cleaning. Do not reuse bottles until they have been cleaned.

For more information call the
HEALTH Information Line
1-800-942-7434

