

SAFELY STORING BREAST MILK

FRESHLY EXPRESSED MILK	TEMPERATURE	STORAGE TIME	COMMENTS
Room Temperature	Up to 77° F or 25° C	6-8 hours	Containers should be covered and kept as cool as possible; covering the container with a cool towel may keep milk cooler.
Insulated cooler/icepacks	5-39° F or 4°C	24 hours	Keep ice packs in contact with milk containers at all times, limit opening cooler bag.
REFRIGERATED MILK	TEMPERATURE	STORAGE TIME	COMMENTS
Refrigerator (fresh milk)	39° F or 4°C	5 days	Store milk in the back of the main body of the refrigerator.
FROZEN MILK	TEMPERATURE	STORAGE TIME	COMMENTS
Freezer compartment inside the refrigerator	5° F or -15°C	2 weeks	Store milk towards the back of the freezer, where temperature is most constant. Milk stored for longer durations in the ranges listed is safe, but some of the lipids in the milk undergo degradation resulting in lower quality.
Freezer compartment of a refrigerator (separate doors)	0° F or -18°C	3-6 months	
Chest or upright deep freezer	-4° F or -20°C	6-12 months	

A Helpful Tip To avoid waste and for easier thawing and warming, store milk in 1-4 ounce portions!

Safely Preparing and Storing Expressed Breast Milk:

- Wash hands before expressing or handling breast milk.
- Store milk in clean containers, such as screw cap bottles, hard plastic cups with tight caps, or heavy-duty bags that lift directly into nursery bottles. Avoid using ordinary plastic storage bags or formula bottle bags, as these could easily leak or spill.
- Clearly label the breast milk container with the child's name and date
- Do not add fresh milk to already frozen milk within a storage container.
- Do not save milk from a used bottle for use at another feeding.

Thawing Breast Milk

- Thaw breast milk by transferring it to the refrigerator for thawing or by swirling in the bag or bottle in a bowl of warm water.
- Avoid using the microwave oven to thaw or heat bottles of breast milk
 - Bottles may explode if left in the microwave too long.
 - Excess heat can destroy the nutrient quality of the expressed milk.
 - Microwaving can create “hotspots” that burn the child's tongue.

Reference: CDC. Proper Handling and Storage of Human Milk. www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm. Updated March 4, 2010. Accessed July 11, 2013.

