

Breast Milk Storage Guidelines*

Storage Temperatures	Countertop or table	Refrigerator	Deep Freezer
Freshly Pumped/ Expressed Breast Milk	Up to 77 °F (25 °C)	At or below 40 °F (4 °C)	At or below -4 °F (-20 °C)
Thawed Breast Milk	Up to 4 hours	Up to 4 days	Up to 12 months
	1-2 hours	Up to 1 day (24 hours)	Up to 6 months
			Never refreeze thawed Breast milk

* These guidelines are for healthy full-term babies and may vary for premature or sick babies. Check with your health care provider. Guidelines are for home use only and not for hospital use.

Hand Expression

Hand expression is an alternative method of expressing your breast milk than using an electric or hand pump. With hand expression, you gently squeeze out or express your breast milk by hand. Some mothers prefer hand expression instead of using a breast pump. Hand expression can be an easy way to relieve overly full breasts or to provide occasional bottles of breast milk for your baby. These tips may help you hand express your milk.

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water, and get a clean container ready to collect the milk. A bowl or funnel placed in a jar may make the collection easier.
- Find a place to relax while you express your milk.

Before starting:

- Using small, circle-like motions, massage your breast to help get your milk flowing. Move your hands all around your breast from your chest to your nipple. Warm washcloths or a warm bath or shower may help.
- With your thumb on top of your breast and your first two fingers under the breast, gently hold your breast about 1 inch behind the nipple. Press back toward the chest wall, then roll your fingers and thumb toward your nipple.
- Gently squeeze while you roll your fingers forward. Repeat the pressing and rolling motion, moving your fingers to a new position until you've been all the way around your breast. If the milk flow seems to slow down, you may repeat the massage and try a new position for expression, or you can express from the second breast. Then go back to the first breast until the flow slows.
- Be gentle and avoid squeezing or pulling on the nipple. Also, do not slide your hands over your breast. Practice for the first time after your baby has nursed while your milk is already flowing. Early in the morning is another good time to try.
- Don't be discouraged if you don't get much milk at first. If you are trying to relieve a full breast, expressing even a small amount can help. With practice, some women can express whole bottles of milk!



If you have questions...

call your WIC peer counselor, breastfeeding coordinator, lactation consultant or doctor.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

ML-009107 5/17

breast milk expression & storage



breast pumps


There are several ways to provide your baby with natural nutrition when you're away or aren't able to actively breastfeed.

The use of a breast pump is one convenient way to do this.

Choosing a breast pump can be confusing since there are many manual pumps on the market. If you need help choosing a pump, discuss with other mothers, a breastfeeding peer counselor or a lactation consultant. Once you buy a pump, be sure to read how to put it together and use it correctly.

Whether using an **electric** or **manual pump**, be sure to follow the tips below:

- Remember to always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before assembling your pump.
- Sit down in a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. Try to relax and think about your baby. Relaxing is an important part of being good at pumping. Listening to music or looking at a photo of your baby may help.
- A good time to start pumping is in the morning when your breasts are full of milk or after you have nursed the baby, when the milk is already flowing.
- Massage your breasts before and during pumping to encourage your milk to flow.
- For correct placement, the wide part of the pump (flange) should rest against the dark part of your breast (areola) with your nipple centered in the opening. Your nipple should not touch the side of the flange because it may rub, and this rubbing, when pumping, may cause soreness. If it rubs, talk to your breastfeeding counselor to get a different size flange. Wet the flange with water or breast milk for better suction.
- Set the pump at the lowest suction setting at first, and the slowest speed (for electric pumps). Then, increase in small increments as needed.
- After each use, take the breast pump kit apart. Every part that the milk has touched should be washed with hot, soapy water and rinsed well. If available, you can use a reusable microwave steam clean sterilizer bag to sterilize your pump parts. Be sure to allow all parts to air dry. *Note: Boil the pump for 10 minutes or wash in a dishwasher at least once per day.*



Learning to pump milk takes practice. Some women can pump more milk than others. The amount of milk you pump may not tell you how much the baby is taking from the breast. With time and practice, the amount of milk expressed will increase and the pumping process will become second nature. Keep practicing to find out how pumping works best for you.

Electric Breast Pumping

Electric breast pumps are sometimes used by mothers after returning to work or school, or by mothers of premature babies who are not strong enough to nurse from the breast.

Tips for electric breast pumping:

- Single or double kits will work when using electric breast pumps; however, double pumping kits take less time and can increase the amount of milk expressed.
- If using a single pump, switch breasts a few times during pumping. The time it takes to empty both breasts varies in each woman, but it should not take more than 30 minutes. If using a double pump, it should take approximately half the time of the single pump.

Manual Breast Pumping

A manual breast pump can help some nursing mothers by supplying breast milk to give in a bottle if baby and mom will be apart. Manual breast pumps can also quickly relieve discomfort from very full breasts. It takes time to get good at pumping, so don't expect large amounts of milk at first. Following these tips can help make manual pumping a success.

- Try to copy your baby's sucking rhythm with the pump. Practice with different rhythms to see which works best. Some women prefer a very steady rhythm, while others will pump, then stop a few seconds and then pump again.



Breast Milk Storage

Here are some tips you can use to store your milk:

- First, make sure the bottle or jar you use to collect your breast milk is clean. After every use, wash these items in hot, soapy water and rinse well. Once a day, place them in a pot of boiling water for 10 minutes or run them through a dishwasher if they are dishwasher safe.
- Next, wash your hands before pumping or expressing your milk.
- Pump or express your milk into the clean bottle or jar.
- Store your milk in amounts of 2-4 ounces. Storing in small amounts prevents wasting your milk. Milk left over from a feeding cannot be reused and must be thrown out.
- Glass or hard plastic (BPA free) bottles are recommended for storage. If you use plastic bags, be sure they are designed for storing breast milk. Avoid using ordinary plastic storage bags or formula bottle bags. They can easily leak or spill.
- Keep the milk in the refrigerator if you plan to use it within 4 days.
- If you want to keep the milk longer, put it in the freezer. Place the milk in the back of the freezer, not the door.
- When freezing your milk, leave some room at the top of the bottle or jar. This prevents the milk from spilling over when it freezes.
- Do not add just collected warm milk to chilled or frozen milk. Cool the milk first in the refrigerator.
- Thaw your breast milk in a bowl of warm water or hold the bottle or jar under warm running tap water. **Never use a microwave or stove to warm breast milk.**
- Breast milk may separate during storage. That's okay—it is not spoiled milk. Gently shake the milk.
- Use thawed milk within 24 hours. **Do not refreeze thawed breast milk.**

See other side for Safe Breastmilk Storage Chart.

