

Breastmilk Storage:

Guidelines for Child Care Facilities vs. Home Storage

Breastmilk is the preferred food for infants in the child care setting. There is a range for safe handling and storage guidelines, because breastmilk is a living food with immune-boosting and antibacterial properties. The 2013 Nebraska Child Care Licensure Regulations for child care facilities have established stricter guidelines than home milk storage guidelines. This information sheet aims to help providers and parents follow both home and child care milk storage guidelines to meet the needs of their breastfed infants.

Nebraska Child Care Licensure Regulations (2013)		
Breastmilk Storage at Child Care Facilities		
	Refrigerator	Freezer
Unfrozen (Fresh) Milk	Up to 48 hours	-
Frozen Milk	-	Up to 3 months

Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine Protocol #8 (2010)		
Breastmilk Storage Guidelines at Home		
	Refrigerator	Freezer*
Freshly Expressed Milk	72 hours (optimal) 5 -8 days (under very clean conditions)	6 months (optimal) 12 months (acceptable)
Thawed Milk (Previously Frozen)	Use within 24 hours after thaw	Do not refreeze

* Freezer compartment of refrigerator with separate doors or a deep freeze.

Considerations on Milk Storage:

Nebraska Child Care Licensing Regulations, revised in 2013, reflect a lower range for freezer and refrigerator storage to err on the side of greater food safety.

The child care facility has 2 days (up to 48 hours) to use unfrozen (fresh) milk.

Child Care providers can keep frozen milk for up to 3 months.

Home storage guidelines allow a longer period of time for refrigerator and freezer storage and it is up to the mother to ensure safe storage within the guidelines.

Milk that is expressed in sanitary conditions (clean hands, equipment, space) will ensure greater safety.

Encourage mothers to express milk in a clean location (not a bathroom), wash hands before pumping, and chill or refrigerate the milk promptly.

The longer fresh or frozen milk is stored, the more nutrients it loses. This is the reason that fresh milk is best and should be used first.

Tips to Bridge Child Care and Home Milk Storage Guidelines:

All milk brought to child care needs to be appropriately labeled:

Mommy's Milk

Baby's Name:	
Date to Provider*:	
Amount:	
<i>Date Expressed</i>	
<i>Date Frozen</i>	

**Use unfrozen (fresh) milk within 48 hours or give back to parents*

Milk that is not labeled should be discarded.

Milk that is past the Child Care Storage Regulations should be given back to the parent.

Milk stored for longer durations in the ranges listed is safe, but some of the nutrients in the milk decrease, resulting in lower quality.

Other Reminders and Tips for Providers & Moms

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) classifies human milk as a FOOD, not a bodily fluid. It is not considered a bio-hazardous substance.

To prevent the spread of germs, wash your hands before preparing any bottle.

Use the oldest fresh milk first and then use the oldest frozen milk when fresh milk is not available.

Thaw frozen milk in a warm water bath or under running water. NEVER use a microwave to thaw or warm human milk.

Store breastmilk in small quantities (1-4 ounces) to limit waste.

Store milk towards the back of the freezer or refrigerator, where temperature is most constant.

If the fresh milk has not been frozen, but exceeds 48 hours at the facility, give the milk back to the parents to freeze or use at home.

Keep a small frozen supply of milk for each child. If the frozen milk passes the 3 month date, give back to the parent for home use.

Sources:

Nebraska Child Care Licensing Rules and Regulations (2013):

<http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Pages/crlChildCareLicensingIndex.aspx>

ABM Clinical Protocol #8: Human Milk Storage Information for Home Use for Full-Term Infants (Original Protocol March 2004; Revision #1 March 2010):

<https://www.liebertpub.com/doi/full/10.1089/bfm.2017.29047.aje>