

Collecting and Storing Pumped Milk

- Wash your hands with soap and water and find a comfortable place to sit.
- To help your milk let down, gently massage your breasts in circles or stroke towards the nipple.
- Collect and store milk in a clean, glass or hard plastic food grade (BPA free) storage container or bag.
- Pump until you remove the milk you need, but no longer than 20 minutes. If pumping hurts, see an IBCLC for help with flange fit and pump settings.
- Seal container well. If freezing your milk, leave space at the top of the container for the frozen milk to expand. Place the container in the back of the freezer, farthest from the door, to prevent thawing.
- Wash your pump parts with soap and water, in a basin used just for that purpose, and let dry (do not soak for long periods of time, see CDC handout).

Most parents store from 2-5 ounces (60-150 cc) in each container. This is how much most babies older than one month of age eat in one feeding. You may combine milk from both breasts into one storage container. **If you add newly pumped milk to cold or frozen milk, cool the new milk first.**

How long can you store pumped milk? Breast milk does not “spoil” easily. Below are guidelines from the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (www.bfmed.org). Frozen breastmilk does not become “dangerous” if it is stored longer than these guidelines, however, its nutritional and protective factors decrease with time. Do not use milk stored for longer than 12 months as the ONLY source of nutrition for your baby.

Room Temp (60-85 degrees)

Up to 4 hours is best
Up to 8 hours is acceptable*

Refrigerator (39 degrees)

Up to 4 days is best
Up to 8 days is acceptable*

Freezer (0 degrees)**

Up to 6 months is best
12 months is acceptable

**If collected in very clean conditions*

***Do not store in door of freezer*

Feed your baby fresh (never frozen) milk if it is available. When defrosting frozen milk, place the container of milk in the refrigerator overnight to minimize fat loss. If faster thawing is needed, place frozen milk in a pan of cool water or under cool running water. Do not every microwave breast milk or place the container of milk in a pan of hot water (>175°F) as protective proteins may be inactivated. Defrosted milk is not to be re-frozen, but may be stored for up to 24 hours in the refrigerator. It is normal for defrosted milk to separate. Swirl gently to blend. If you feel your expressed breastmilk has an unusual odor, please see our information on **Unusual Odors in Pumped Breast Milk**.

There is **very little** research on storing milk if your baby does not finish a bottle of fresh, refrigerated or defrosted pumped milk. Most people are comfortable storing the unfinished milk in the refrigerator and having baby finish the bottle within two hours. To avoid tossing milk, do not offer large amounts that you know your baby will not finish.

For current Nebraska DHHS Breastmilk Storage Guidelines for in-home and daycare centers, visit:

<https://dhhs.ne.gov/licensure/Documents/BreastmilkStorageInfo.pdf>

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