

Guidelines on Storing, Handling, and Feeding Breastmilk

From A Guide for Use in the Child Nutrition Programs, USDA

Breastmilk needs to be stored and handled safely to keep it from spoiling. Follow the specific health and safety regulations that are required by your State and local authorities for safe food handling. General tips for handling breastmilk follow.

Handling of Breastmilk Before Arriving at the Facility

Ask mothers to:

- Store their breastmilk in the refrigerator or freezer right after they express it and label the bottles with:
 - the baby's name, and
 - the date and time the breastmilk was collected.
- Store the milk in hard plastic bottles if possible because these are unbreakable.
- Fill the bottles with the amount of breastmilk the baby usually drinks at one feeding. Some babies may consume less than 4 ounces at a feeding. The mother can freeze some bottles with 1 to 2 ounces of breastmilk for times when the baby wants some extra breastmilk.
- Carry bottles of fresh or frozen breastmilk to the facility in a cooler with an ice pack to keep the milk at a cold temperature.

Handling and Storing Breastmilk at the Facility

- Breastmilk from a mother is designed specially to meet the needs of her baby. If more than one baby or child is drinking from bottles, make sure that each bottle is clearly labeled with the baby's or child's name and never accept an unlabeled bottle from a parent. Do not use unlabeled bottles that have been accidentally accepted.
- Refrigerate bottles immediately when they arrive and until ready to use.
- Use bottles of breastmilk only for the baby for whom they are intended.
- To prevent spoiling, do not allow bottles of breastmilk to stand at room temperature.
- Use refrigerated bottles of fresh breastmilk, kept at 40° Fahrenheit or below, within 48 hours from the time they were collected. Throw out unused breastmilk if not used within 48 hours. Although some suggest that fresh breastmilk can be stored for longer than 48 hours, the 48-hour period assures safety.
- Breastmilk can be stored in a freezer (with a separate door from the refrigerator), for up to 3 months from when it was collected. Freezer temperature should be 0° Fahrenheit or below. If the freezer is not working or if there is a power failure, frozen milk may thaw out and become spoiled before 3 months. See page 74 on checking the temperature of your freezer.
- Rotate frozen breastmilk, using the oldest milk first.
- Protect breastmilk in an air-tight container (hard plastic bottles are recommended) while in the freezer. Once the breastmilk is removed from the freezer and thawed, refrigerate it at 40° Fahrenheit or below and use it within 24 hours; do not refreeze it.
- Do not save and reuse breastmilk leftover from bottles.
- Wash skin on which breastmilk has spilled with soap and water immediately.

Storing breastmilk in childcare settings

- Refrigerator: 48 hours*
- Frozen:
 - Freezer at about 10 degrees F: 2 weeks
 - Upright or chest freezer 0 degrees F: 3 months
 - 4 degrees F: 6 months
- Thawed breastmilk: 24 hours

*Don't refreeze thawed breast milk or
re-feed bottles of breastmilk.*

http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/feeding_infants.pdf.
WACs 170-296A-1750, 170-295-4050

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