

# Breastmilk Storage & Handling

<b>HUMAN MILK STORAGE - QUICK REFERENCE CARD</b>		
	Temperature	Storage Time
<b>Freshly expressed milk</b>		
Warm room	80-90°F / 27-32°C	3-4 hours
Room temperature	61-79°F / 16-26°C	4-8 hours (ideal: 3-4 hours)
Insulated cooler / icepacks	59°F / 15°C	24 hours
<b>Refrigerated Milk</b> (Store at back, away from door)		
Refrigerator (fresh milk)	32-39°F / 0-4°C	3-8 days (ideal: 3 days)
Refrigerator (thawed milk)	32-39°F / 0-4°C	24 hours
<b>Frozen Milk</b> (Do not refreeze! Store at back, away from door/sides)		
Freezer compartment inside refrigerator (older-style)	Varies	2 weeks
Self-contained freezer unit of a refrigerator/freezer	<39°F / <4°C	6 months
Separate deep freeze	0°F / -18°C	12 months (ideal: 6 months)
<i>These guidelines are for milk expressed for a full-term healthy baby. If baby is seriously ill and/or hospitalized, discuss storage guidelines with baby's doctor.</i>		

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To avoid waste and for easier thawing & warming, store milk in 1-4 ounce portions. Milk from different pumping sessions/days may be combined in one container – use the date of the first milk expressed. Avoid adding warm milk to a container of previously refrigerated or frozen milk – cool the new milk before combining. Breastmilk is not spoiled unless it smells really bad or tastes sour.

## To thaw milk

- Thaw slowly in the refrigerator (this takes about 12 hours – try putting it in the fridge the night before you need it). Avoid letting milk sit out at room temperature to thaw.
- For quicker thawing, hold container under running water - start cool and gradually increase temperature.

Previously frozen milk may be kept in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours after it has finished thawing. **Do not refreeze.**

## To warm milk

- Heat water in a cup or other small container, then place frozen milk in the water to warm; or
- Use a bottle warmer.
- **NEVER microwave human milk or heat it directly on the stove.**

The cream will rise to the top of the milk during storage. Gently swirl milk (*do not shake*) to mix before checking temperature and offering to baby.

**If baby does not finish milk at one feeding**, it is probably safe to refrigerate and offer within 1-2 hours before it is discarded.

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