

Your Guide to Breast Milk Handling and Storage

Keep your baby safe and protect your breast milk using these safety practices.

Collect Your Breast Milk

- Wash hands with soap and water or use 60% alcohol hand sanitizer
- Label containers with name, ounces of milk, date, and time
- Always store in individual breast milk storage bags, bottles, or other food grade containers

Pro Tips!



Safe milk starts with clean hands and equipment. Add a bottle of sanitizer to your pumping bag!



Always label with name, ounces of milk, date, and time.



Milk bags occasionally leak! Put frozen milk bags inside a bowl when thawing overnight in the refrigerator.

Using Breast Milk

- Thaw overnight in a bowl in the refrigerator
- Thaw or warm milk in a bowl of warm water or under warm running water
- Milk that is warmed or partially fed to baby should be used within 2 hours

Have more questions or concerns specific to your breastfeeding journey? Nest IBCLCs are here to help!

Schedule your next appointment with a Nest Collaborative IBCLC by visiting www.nestcollaborative.com or by calling (888) 598-1554.

Safe Storage Location	Safe Storage Time Frame
Freshly Expressed or Pumped Human Milk	
Countertop (77°F or colder)	Up to 4 hours
Refrigerator (40°F)	Up to 4 days
Freezer (0°F or colder)	Within 12 months *Within 6 months is optimal
Thawed, Previously Frozen Human Milk	
Countertop (77°F or colder)	1-2 hours
Refrigerator (40°F)	Up to 24 hours
Freezer (0°F or colder)	Thawed milk should not be refrozen
Leftover from a Feeding (unfinished bottle)	
Use within 2 hours	

References:
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022, January 24). Breastfeeding guidelines & recommendations: Proper storage and preparation of breast milk.
https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm#print