

Human milk varies in color, consistency and odor, depending on the mother's diet. Because breastmilk is not homogenized, the cream will separate and rise to the top of the container. Breastmilk may be safely stored by carefully following these steps:

1. Wash your hands well with soap and water before touching your breasts or any milk containers. Avoid touching the inside of bottles or caps.
2. Pump or express milk into a clean collection cup.
3. Transfer the milk into a clean storage container. If you can pump directly into a storage container, such as a Medela CSF bag, it will lessen the chance of contamination.
4. Label the container with the date and amount of milk collected; be sure to use the oldest milk first.
5. Because breastmilk contains antibacterial factors, freshly pumped breastmilk can be kept safely at room temperature for a few hours, but it is still best to refrigerate your milk as soon as possible.
6. Fresh breastmilk may be kept safely in the refrigerator for up to 72 hours.
7. For longer storage, freeze your breastmilk. Frozen milk may be stored in a refrigerator freezer for six months or in a deep freeze (-20°F) for up to 12 months. Fill the container only 3/4 full to allow room for expansion during freezing. Freeze the milk in 2-oz. to 4-oz. portions. These smaller amounts will thaw quicker. If your baby doesn't drink the entire portion, there is less waste. It is possible to combine fresh milk with frozen milk. To prevent premature thawing, always cool milk before combining it with previously frozen milk. The amount of newly added milk must be less than the amount of milk already frozen. **Never** refreeze breastmilk.

THAWING FROZEN BREASTMILK

1. Place the sealed container of milk in a bowl of warm water for about 30 minutes, or hold the container under warm running water. **Never** microwave breastmilk; microwaving can alter the composition of the breastmilk and result in burning your baby.
2. Swirl the container to blend any fat that may have separated and risen during thawing.
3. Feed thawed milk immediately or store in the refrigerator for a maximum of 24 hours.

TRAVELING WITH BREASTMILK

When caregivers take bottles of breastmilk along on outings, milk should be kept cold until feeding time to ensure that it will be fresh and safe for your baby. The cooler in the Medela Lactina Accessory Kit and the Medela CoolerCase are ideal for this purpose.

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