

Storing, transporting and using expressed breastmilk (0–18 months)

Safe storage, transport and use of expressed breastmilk

Expressing breastmilk for use later can be a good way to continue breastfeeding when things like work and travel make it harder for your baby to latch directly onto your breast. It's important to store, transport and prepare breastmilk correctly so that it remains safe for your baby to drink.

Tips for storing expressed breastmilk

After you've expressed, store your breastmilk in a clean, closed container or a special breastmilk storage bag. You can buy storage bags from shops that sell baby essentials.

It's best to refrigerate or freeze breastmilk after expressing. Don't forget to write the date of expressing on the storage container or bag before you refrigerate or freeze the breastmilk.

You can store **freshly expressed breastmilk**:

- at room temperature (25°C or lower) for up to 4 hours
- in a cooler with ice pack at 15°C for up to 24 hours
- in the fridge (4°C or lower) for up to 48 hours – the best spot is the back of the fridge where it's coldest
- in the freezer section (–15°C or lower) of a fridge with separate door for 3–6 months
- in a chest or upright deep freezer (–20°C or lower) for 6–12 months.

You can store **breastmilk that has been thawed in the fridge (but not warmed)**:

- at room temperature (25°C or lower) for four hours or less – that is, until the next feed
- in the fridge for up to 24 hours – the best spot is the back of the fridge where it's coldest.

You can store **breastmilk that has been thawed in warm water**:

- at room temperature (25°C or lower) for one hour

Do not refreeze previously frozen breastmilk.

Place of Storage	Storage Duration
Freshly expressed milk at room temperature of 25°C	4 hours
Freshly expressed milk in a cooler with ice pack at 15°C	24 hours
Freshly expressed milk stored in the fridge at 4°C	48 hours
Frozen milk in two-door fridge stored at -5°C to 15°C	3–6 months

Frozen milk in deep freezer at -20°C	6–12 months
Thawed breast milk stored in the fridge at 4°C	24 hours
Thawed breast milk in room temperature (25°C)	1 hour

(As recommended by the Health Promotion Board)

Tips for transporting expressed breastmilk

You can transport expressed breastmilk – for example, you can express at work and bring the milk home for your baby to drink later.

Expressed breastmilk can travel:

- in an insulated container like a chiller or cooler bag with a freezer brick

As soon as you arrive, place the breastmilk in the fridge or in the freezer if it's still frozen.

Tips for preparing expressed breastmilk for use

You can give your baby expressed breastmilk with a cup, spoon or bottle. Use fresh breastmilk first, if you have some.

You can thaw breastmilk in the fridge so it stays cold and lasts longer. Or if you're in a hurry, you can thaw it by putting the sealed container of breastmilk inside another container of water like a bowl.

To warm the breastmilk, place the bottle or container of breastmilk in warm water. Gently swirl, and test the temperature of the milk before feeding your baby. The temperature should be lukewarm or around body temperature.

Don't use a microwave oven to thaw or warm the milk, because this destroys some of the components of breastmilk. It can also result in hot spots, which can burn a baby.

If your baby doesn't finish his feed of expressed breastmilk, you can't use it for another feed. You should throw it away.