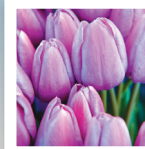


Breast Milk

Storage Duration



Storage Duration of Fresh Human Milk for Use with Healthy Full-Term Infants

These guidelines are for mothers who are expressing milk for a healthy infant. Use clean containers and wash your hands with soap and water before expressing or pumping. When providing milk for a baby who is pre-term (delivered before 38 weeks gestation), seriously ill, and/or hospitalized, check with healthcare providers for instructions.

Location	Temperature	Duration	Comments
Countertop, table	Room temperature (up to 77°F or 25°C)	6–8 hours	Containers should be covered and kept as cool as possible; covering the container with a cool towel may keep milk cooler.
Insulated cooler bag	5–39°F or -15–4°C	24 hours	Keep ice packs in contact with milk containers at all times, limit opening cooler bag.
Refrigerator	39°F or 4°C	5 days	Store milk in the back of the main body of the refrigerator.
Freezer			
Freezer compartment of a refrigerator	5°F or -15°C	2 weeks	Store milk toward the back of the freezer, where temperature is most constant. Milk stored for longer durations in the ranges listed is safe, but some of the lipids in the milk undergo degradation resulting in lower quality. Freezer must be cold enough to keep ice cream hard.
Freezer compartment of refrigerator with separate doors	0°F or -18°C	3–6 months	
Chest or upright deep freezer	-4°F or -20°C	6–12 months	

Reference: Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine. (2004) *Clinical Protocol Number #8: Human Milk Storage Information for Home Use for Healthy Full-Term Infants* [PDF-125k]. Princeton Junction, New Jersey: Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine. Available at bfmed.org

Save or Dump

Type of Milk	Save or Dump?	Why
Milk remaining in the bottle that has been offered to baby	Use for next feeding, otherwise discard.	Bacteria from the baby's mouth may have entered the milk during the feeding. This may lead to bacterial contamination if it sets too long (though as yet there is no research available).
Milk that has been thawed	Save in the refrigerator for 24 hours after thawing, then discard. Do not refreeze.	Milk that has been frozen has lost some of the immune properties that inhibit bacterial growth in fresh refrigerated milk.
Milk that has been kept in the refrigerator for eight days	Transfer to storage in the freezer, or discard.	Bacterial growth is not a problem, but milk sometimes picks up odors or flavors from the refrigerator or the container.

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