

# Human Milk Storage Guidelines for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

**These guidelines are for healthy full term babies<sup>1</sup>**

*Guidelines are for home use only and not for hospital use.*

|                                                          | Counter top<br>or table           | Refrigerator                               | Freezer with<br>separate door                          | Deep Freezer                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Storage<br/>Temperatures *</b>                        | Up to 77°F <sup>2</sup><br>(25°C) | At or below<br>40°F <sup>2,3,4</sup> (4°C) | 0°F <sup>2</sup> (-18°C)                               | At or below -4°F <sup>5</sup><br>(-20°C)               |
| <b>Freshly<br/>Pumped /<br/>Expressed<br/>Human milk</b> | Up to 4 hours <sup>2</sup>        | Up to 4 days <sup>2,3</sup>                | Up to 6 months <sup>2,3</sup>                          | Up to 12 months <sup>5</sup>                           |
| <b>Thawed<br/>Human Milk</b>                             | 1-2 hours <sup>4</sup>            | Up to 1 day<br>(24 hours) <sup>2,4</sup>   | Never re-freeze<br>thawed human<br>milk <sup>2-5</sup> | Never re-freeze<br>thawed human<br>milk <sup>2-5</sup> |

\* Storage times and temperatures may vary for premature or sick babies. Check with your health care provider.

1. Adapted from 7th Edition American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Pediatric Nutrition Handbook (2014); 2nd Edition AAP/American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) Breastfeeding Handbook for Physicians (2014); and Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM) Clinical Protocol #8 Human Milk Storage Guidelines (2010).
2. 2nd Edition AAP/ACOG Breastfeeding Handbook for Physicians (2014).
3. 7th Edition AAP Pediatric Nutrition Handbook (2014).
4. ABM Clinical Protocol #8 Human Milk Storage Guidelines (2010).
5. CDC Human Milk Storage Guidelines accessed at:  
[www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling\\_breastmilk.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm).

# Human Milk Storage Guidelines Tips

## Collection and Storage

- Wash your hands. Wash bottles and pumping supplies in hot soapy water or in the dishwasher.\*
- Human milk can be stored in clean glass or BPA-free\*\* plastic bottles with tight fitting lids. Put the collection date on the container.
- If you are giving the milk to your childcare provider, put your child's name on the container and talk to your childcare provider about storage guidelines for human milk.
- When traveling short periods of time, such as to and from work or school, store your pumped/expressed milk in an insulated cooler bag with frozen ice packs.
- Refer to the Human Milk Storage Guidelines chart for storage time and temperatures of human milk.

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- *Don't use disposable bottle liners or other plastic bags to store your human milk.*
  - *Don't store milk on the shelves in the door of the refrigerator because the temperature varies due to the frequency of opening and closing the door.*

\* Check the manufacture information on whether pump parts can be washed in the dishwasher.

\*\* Bottles with the recycle symbol number 7 indicates that the container may be made of BPA-containing plastic.

## Freezing Milk

- Freeze milk in small batches of 2 to 4 ounces.
- Leave an inch or so of space at the top of the container because milk will expand as it freezes.
- Store milk in the back of the freezer. Don't store milk on the shelves of the freezer door.
- Chill freshly pumped milk before adding it to frozen milk.

## Thawing and Warming Milk

- Use the oldest stored milk first. Practice FIFO (first in, first out).
- Human milk does not need to be warmed. It can be served room temperature or cold.
- Gently swirl the milk (don't shake it) to mix it, as it is normal for human milk to separate. Note – If you do warm your milk, test the milk temperature by dropping some on your wrist. It should be comfortably warm.
- Milk may be thawed in several ways, (1) in the refrigerator overnight, (2) under running warm water or (3) in a container of warm water.
- Milk thawed should be used within one hour after it is thawed or placed in the refrigerator. Milk thawed in the refrigerator should be used within one day (24 hours) after it is thawed.
- Discard unused milk left in the bottle within 1 -2 hours after the baby is finished feeding.

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- *Do not microwave human milk. Microwaving breaks down nutrients and creates hot spots, which can burn your baby's mouth.*
  - *Never refreeze thawed human milk even if it had been refrigerated.*