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ollecting and Storing Breastmilk For Your Breastfed Baby

These guidelines are for families with healthy, full term babies. If you have a preemie or are expressing milk for a sick child, please talk to your health care provider.



Handling Breastmilk Safely

- ◆ Always wash your hands first.
- ◆ Make sure all pump parts are clean.
- ◆ Use clean containers that seal tightly and are intended to hold breast milk.
- ◆ Breast milk is safe and sterile but can be contaminated if it comes in contact with bacteria from your hands or pump parts.

When Collecting Breastmilk

- ◆ Fill bags and bottles in feeding size portions, usually about 2 to 3 ounces.
- ◆ The average pumping session yields 1 1/2 to 2 ounces total. This is not a reflection of milk production or how much your baby is getting.
- ◆ Even the best breastpumps can only express 1/3 to 1/2 of what your baby can get while nursing.
- ◆ Leave space in the container if freezing as the liquid will expand.
- ◆ Date all bottles and bags. Always use the oldest milk first.
- ◆ Put your baby's name on all bottles if they are going to daycare.
- ◆ Clean pump after each use.



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Guidelines for Storing Breastmilk

From the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

- ◆ Room temperature up to 77 degrees: **6 to 8 hours**
- ◆ Insulated cooler bag with frozen ice packs: **24 hours**
- ◆ Refrigerator: **5 days**
- ◆ Refrigerator freezer: **3 to 6 months**
- ◆ Deep freezer: **6 to 12 months**
- ◆ Always store milk in the back of the fridge or freezer where the temperature is more consistent. Never in the front or the door.
- ◆ If you are unable to pump enough milk for a full feeding at each expression, you may add small amounts of chilled milk to a single container over the course of the day.

Thawing Breastmilk

- ◆ Thaw only the amount of breastmilk needed for a feeding.
- ◆ It is best to thaw breastmilk in the refrigerator over night but it will thaw out quickly in a bowl of cool water.
- ◆ To warm breastmilk, run warm water from the tap over the bottle or bag or set it in a pan or bowl of warm water. **Never** boil or microwave breastmilk.
- ◆ Gently rotate the container before feeding breastmilk to your baby. This will help to mix the fat layer that separates during storage.
- ◆ Use the thawed breastmilk within 24 hours of thawing and warming if it is refrigerated or within one hour if it is at room temperature.
- ◆ Throw out any breastmilk left in your baby's bottle at the end of a feeding. Bacteria in your baby's mouth can make milk unsafe to drink.
- ◆ **Never** refreeze thawed breastmilk.



Please contact your local WIC office with any questions or concerns.