

Breast Milk Storage Guidelines



Neb Doctors of Maryland
our best for your kids

Storage Locations	Temperature	Time	Comments
Freshly Pumped Breast Milk			
Room Temperature	66-77°F	3- 4 hours (Ideal) Up to 6- 8 hours (Acceptable)*	Contents should be covered and kept as cool as possible; cover container with a damp towel to keep milk cooler.
Cooler with Ice Pack	Less than 59°F	Up to 24 hours	Keep ice packs in constant contact with milk containers and limit opening cooler bag.
Refrigerator	32-39°F	72 hours (Ideal) Up to 8 days (Acceptable)**	Collect in a very clean way to minimize spoilage. Always store breast milk towards the back of the refrigerator where temperatures are most consistent.
Frozen Breast Milk			
Freezer Compartment	Less than 32°F	3-6 months	Store breast milk away from the sides and towards the back of the freezer where temperatures are most consistent.
Deep Freezer	Less than 0°F	6-12 months	Frozen milk stored longer than these ranges is usually safe, but some of the fat breaks down over time, which may alter the milk's taste.
Previously Frozen, Defrosted Breast Milk			
Refrigerated	32-39°F	24 hours	To thaw frozen milk, you can move it to the refrigerator (it takes 24 hours to thaw), then warm by running warm water over the bottle or bag and use within 24 hours. Never refreeze thawed breast milk.

*It is recommended to refrigerate or chill milk right after it is expressed
**Eight days acceptable if collected in a very clean, careful way

If your baby was born premature, guidelines may differ slightly. Refer to your health care provider for recommended guidelines. Once your baby has started to drink from the bottle, you should use it within 1 hour. If the baby doesn't finish the bottle, place in refrigerator, then warm and use it at the next feeding.

Never microwave breast milk: Can cause severe burns to baby's mouth from hot spots developing in the milk during microwaving. Microwaving can also change the composition of breast milk.