

# Storing Breastmilk

## A Guide for Parents

### Remember

- Always wash your hands before pumping milk.
- Cool milk before freezing it. When adding newly expressed milk to frozen milk, cool it first.
- Label containers with today's date if you won't be using the milk right away.
- Tightly close container or seal breastmilk storage bags.
- Do not refrigerate or freeze bottle nipples.
- Store 2-4oz of milk per container. Small amounts thaw more quickly.
- When freezing milk, do not fill containers more than 3/4 full to allow room for the milk to expand.
- Never use a microwave to thaw or heat breastmilk. Thaw or briefly warm milk under warm running water.
- Gently mix (don't shake) breastmilk after thawing.
- Put 2-4oz of milk in a bottle to feed your baby. Milk left over from a feeding should be thrown out if not finished within one hour.
- Do not re-freeze breastmilk.
- Bring home unused breastmilk from your child caregiver, re-label and use the next day.



### Freshly Expressed breastmilk can be stored

6-8 hours at room temperature (77° F).  
Throw away leftover milk, if not used that day.

5 days in the refrigerator

3-6 months in the freezer section of a refrigerator

6-12 months in a deep freezer

24 hours in a cooler bag with ice packs.

### Thawed breastmilk guidelines

If thawed in the refrigerator, use within 24 hours.

If thawed on the counter or under running water, use within 4 hours.

#### Label Example

**Name:**  
Joanie  
Esparza

**Date:**  
03/03/18

**Date  
Expressed:**  
03/02/18



If you plan to use a bottle to feed your breastmilk to your baby, ideally wait until breastfeeding is going well & your milk supply is established (may take up to 4-6 weeks).

**For more information, contact your WIC office, La Leche League, a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor, or a Lactation Consultant.**

This has been sourced from the CDC & adapted from NMWIC in collaboration with the New Mexico Breastfeeding Taskforce.  
[www.breastfeedingnm.org](http://www.breastfeedingnm.org)