# Handling Breast Milk

## Breast Milk Storage Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Room Temp</th>
<th>Cooler Bag with Ice Packs</th>
<th>Refrigerator</th>
<th>Freezer</th>
<th>Deep Freezer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshly expressed milk</td>
<td>3 – 4 hours ideal*</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
<td>5 days</td>
<td>Up to 6 months</td>
<td>Up to 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thawed milk</td>
<td>2 – 3 hours</td>
<td>24 hours</td>
<td>Do not refreeze</td>
<td>Do not refreeze</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Up to 8 hours if collected under very clean conditions; seal containers tightly and keep as cool as possible. Keep room temperature under 85°.

Use oldest unexpired fresh breast milk first.

Do not reuse breast milk from a bottle that a baby has drunk from.


Breast milk is a complex food containing many live cells—it’s important to handle it correctly to prevent damaging it.

Wash hands thoroughly before preparing bottles or feeding infants.

To thaw frozen breast milk:
- Place in the refrigerator overnight
- Hold under cool or room temperature running water
- Place the container in a bowl of cool or room temperature running water
- Do not use a microwave, crock pot, or pan on the stove
- Gently swirl breast milk to recombine—do not shake

To warm refrigerated breast milk:
- Place the container in a bowl of warm (not hot) water
- Place the container under warm (not hot) running water
- Do not allow the breast milk to go above body temperature (98.6°)
- Do not use a microwave, crock pot, or pan on the stove
- Gently swirl breast milk to recombine—do not shake