

# Breastmilk Collection and Storage

**Will I need to use a breast pump if I breastfeed?** Many moms breastfeed successfully and never use a breast pump. But breast pumps can play a useful role when a mother returns to work or when a baby is premature or has difficulties learning to nurse, or to boost a mother's milk supply if it falls short.

**Do I need an electric breast pump to express my milk?** No. Ask your nurse or the lactation consultant to show you how to hand express your milk. There is no expense or equipment involved. You use your own hands to massage your breasts to remove your milk. (For an excellent on-line instructional video visit: <http://newborns.stanford.edu/Breastfeeding/HandExpression.html>.)

Hand pumps are also inexpensive and they can work well for a mother who expects to pump only occasionally.

**Why would I need a quality electric double pump?** A quality electric double pump is the most effective choice for a mom with a premature baby or for a mother who is trying to establish a good milk supply when her baby is unable to nurse. A mom who is returning to work will also need this caliber of pump. The *Affordable Care Act* requires that insurance companies provide coverage of the cost of renting or purchasing a breast pump. Some policies will only cover a single pump, but may allow an upgrade, for an extra fee, to a double pump. Medicaid currently covers a pump if your baby is in the RNICU, but this might change soon, to cover all moms who need pumps. In the meantime, WIC is often able to help. Talk to the Peer Breastfeeding Counselor at your WIC Department. An affordable option, especially for a short time, is to rent a professional grade pump (from about \$35/month).

If you are planning to buy a pump, look for a brand that specializes in breastfeeding supplies. Large baby product brands (like those that specialize in baby car seats and baby furniture) often make "electric" pumps that do not work effectively.

## Collecting Breastmilk

- Wash your hands with soap and water. Do not pump in a bathroom stall.
- Wash all the pieces of the pump kit that touch your breasts or the milk. Use hot, soapy water. Rinse carefully, then air dry on a clean towel, or dry immediately with a paper towel.
- Be sure to use the right size flange so that your nipple fits comfortably. Pumping should not hurt. Flanges are available in a variety of sizes from small to extra large. Refer to the manufacturer's web site for options of sizes and availability.
- Increase pump pressure until it is slightly uncomfortable, then back off just one notch. You want to use the most suction possible without it being painful.
- To help get your milk flowing: Remove milk at times when the baby would normally be feeding. When you begin to pump or express, it may help to have an item of your baby's nearby, a picture or blanket or piece of clothing with his scent on it. Applying a warm moist compress or gently massaging the breast may also help. Relax—sit quietly and think of your baby or a relaxing setting.

## For Mothers Returning to Work

- The *Patient Care and Affordable Care Act* requires employers with more than 50 employees to allow nursing moms to take "reasonable" pumping breaks, and they must provide a private place to pump (not a bathroom). See US Dept of Labor Fact Sheet #73 <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs73.htm> for more details. Talk to your supervisor as soon as you can and let them know your plan to continue breastfeeding when you return to work. A small business will likely accommodate your choice if you discuss your needs with them before you return to work. Continued breastfeeding benefits your employer because you are less likely to need time off to care for an ill baby.
- Moms returning to work can help their baby learn to take a bottle once breastfeeding is going well. It is best to wait for 3-4 weeks to introduce bottles and pacifiers.
- Begin to pump and store milk at least 1-2 weeks before returning to work. Pump once a day. After a morning feed is a good time to collect some extra milk. Most employed moms use the fresh milk they pump at work for feedings the next day. They refrigerate Friday's milk for use on Monday. So there is no need to have a huge stockpile of frozen milk before returning to work. Save any frozen milk for emergencies.
- Removing milk frequently is what keeps your breasts making lots of milk. So pump 3 times during an 8 hour work shift, or every 3 hours you are away from your baby. Ten minutes of double pumping during breaks and 15 minutes of pumping during your lunch break, with a quality pump, will help protect your milk supply. If you cannot pump 3 times, pump as often as you can each work day. Any pumping is better than none.
- Extra time cuddling your baby and breastfeeding in the evenings and over the weekend will help your milk supply and protect your special bond with your baby.

# Storage of Breastmilk

- Use clean, capped glass or hard BPA-free plastic containers. You can also use special plastic bags designed for milk collection and storage.
- To minimize waste, store your milk in small quantities (2-4ozs). Label and date it. Refrigerate the milk to cool it quickly. You can add freshly expressed milk to already refrigerated or frozen milk collected that day, but chill it first.
- Only freeze milk that you do not expect to use within the next week. To thaw frozen milk, place it in the refrigerator the night before you intend to use it. Or you can gently warm the milk by placing it under warm running water or in a bowl of warm water. Before offering the milk to your baby, gently swirl it to evenly distribute the creamy portion of the milk that rises to the top of the container during storage. Don't vigorously shake the container or stir the milk, as this damages protective antibodies in the milk.
- Never thaw frozen breast milk at room temperature, which would enable bacteria to multiply in the milk. Also, don't heat a frozen bottle in the microwave or very quickly on the stove. Do not refreeze breastmilk and do not keep it for longer than 24 hours. See STORAGE GUIDELINES (1) below.

## STORAGE GUIDELINES:

PLACE	TEMPERATURE	HOW LONG?	THINGS TO KNOW
<b>Table</b>	Room temperature (60°F-85°F)	Up to 4 hours is best. Okay for 6 hours for very clean expressed milk	Container should be covered. Throw out any leftover milk within 1-2 hours after baby is finished feeding.
<b>Small cooler with blue ice packs</b>	59°F	24 hours	Keep icepacks in contact with milk containers. Limit opening cooler bag.
<b>Refrigerator</b>	39°F or colder	Up to 3 days is best. Up to 7 days is OK for very clean expressed milk	Store in the back of the main part of the refrigerator.
<b>Freezer</b>	0°F or colder	Up to 6 months is best. Up to 12 months is OK.	Store towards the back of the freezer.

## GUIDELINES FOR STORING THAWED BREASTMILK:

	ROOM TEMPERATURE (60°F TO 85°F)	REFRIGERATOR (39°F or colder)	ANY FREEZER
<b>Breastmilk thawed in the fridge</b>	Up to 1-2 hours is best Up to 3-4 hours is OK	24 hour	Do not refreeze
<b>Breastmilk thawed to room temperature</b>	1 hour	4 hours if already thawed to room temperature.	Do not refreeze

## STORING MILK THAT BABY HAS ALREADY STARTED FEEDING FROM:

	ROOM TEMPERATURE (60°F TO 85°F)	REFRIGERATOR (39°F or colder)	ANY FREEZER
<b>Breastmilk that baby has already fed from</b>	No	Refrigerate right away. Will keep up to 4 hours	Do not refreeze

Reference: (1) Jones, Frances *Best Practice for Expressing, Storing and Handling Human Milk in Hospitals, Homes and Child Care Settings*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 2011. Human Milk Banking Association of North America.

