

Ohio WIC Human Milk Storage Guidelines for Healthy Full-Term Babies

	Room Temperature	Refrigerator	Refrigerator Freezer (Separate Door)	Deep Freezer
Storage Temperature	Up to 77°F (25°C)	At or below 40°F (4°C)	0°F (-18°C)	At or below -4°F (-20°C)
Freshly Pumped/ Expressed	Up to 4 hours	Up to 4 days	Up to 6 months	Up to 12 months
Thawed	Up to 2 hours	Up to 1 day (24 hours)	Never re-freeze thawed human milk	Never re-freeze thawed human milk

Note: These guidelines are for home use only and not for hospital use. Storage times and temperatures may vary for premature or sick babies. Check with your health care provider.

Storage Tips

Collection and Storage

- Wash bottles and pump parts in hot soapy water or the dishwasher (if dishwasher safe).
- Wash hands before handling clean bottles and pump parts.
- Store milk in clean glass or BPA-free plastic bottles or bags designed for human milk storage. (Containers with the recycle symbol number 7 may be made of BPA-containing plastic.)
- Write on the bottle or bag your baby's name and date milk was expressed.
- If giving milk to a childcare provider, talk to the provider about storage guidelines.
- Store containers of milk in a cooler bag with frozen ice packs, when traveling.
- Store milk in the back of the refrigerator due to temperature changes when opening the door.
- Refer to the chart for storage time and temperatures.

Freezing Milk

- Freeze milk in small batches of 2 to 4 ounces. If using plastic bags, lie flat in freezer.
- Leave an inch of space at the top of the container as milk will expand as it freezes.
- Store milk in the back of the freezer due to temperature changes when opening the door.
- Chill freshly pumped milk before adding it to cooled or frozen milk.

Thawing and Warming Milk

- Use the oldest milk first.
- Milk may be thawed in several ways:
 - In the refrigerator overnight
 - Under running lukewarm water
 - In a container of lukewarm water

- Gently swirl the milk to mix (do not shake), as it is normal for human milk to separate.
- Milk can be served room temperature or cold. If warming milk, warm to body temperature over a 20-minute period in lukewarm water.
- Overheating milk during the warming process destroys nutrients. Always test milk on inside of wrist.
- Do not microwave milk, as it breaks down nutrients and creates hot spots, which can burn baby's mouth.
- Milk left in the bottle after a feeding should be used within 2 hours. Discard leftover milk after 2 hours.

Pumping Tips

- Get comfortable and try any of these ways to help you relax:
 - o Massage your breasts
 - o Play relaxing music
 - o Look at a photo of your baby or watch video recordings of your baby
 - o Feel and smell the baby's blanket or piece of clothing
 - o Breathe slowly and deeply or have a fun book or article to read
- When pumping:
 - o Center the nipple in pump flange
 - o If using an electric pump, start with a low suction to help milk letdown and increase suction as comfortable
 - o Pump each side for an average of 8 to 15 minutes until breast is drained
- Best time to pump:
 - o Pump close to baby's nursing times
 - o Pump when your breasts feel full
- How much human milk do I feed my baby?
 - o Start with 1 to 3 ounces in a bottle or cup
 - o Increase the amount of milk as baby's needs change

Using a breast pump should never hurt. If you feel any pain, call your WIC office at:

References:

Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM) Clinical Protocol #8 Human Milk Storage Guidelines, Revised 2017 (2017). American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Pediatric Nutrition Handbook, 7th Edition (2014).

AAP/American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) Breastfeeding Handbook for Physicians, 2nd Edition (2014).

Human Milk Storage Guidelines accessed at: <https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/resources/human-milk-storage-guidelines>



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Adapted from CDC Human Milk Storage Guidelines and Colorado WIC Human Milk Storage Guidelines