

# 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:**

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### 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*