



Breastfeeding Committee
for Saskatchewan

www.thebcs.ca

Important:

Different storage guidelines exist depending on the place where milk is stored and the health of your infant.

Throw out any leftover milk. Do not refreeze your milk.

For further information contact:

Local Public Health Nurse

International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC)

Local breastfeeding support Group

Saskatchewan HealthLine 811

STORAGE OF BREASTMILK

You may need to express and store breastmilk. Reasons why include:

- To relieve your full breasts for comfort
- To increase your milk supply or supplement your baby
- To maintain your supply and provide your milk if you are separated from your baby
- To provide breastmilk if your baby is unable to breastfeed

COLLECTION OF BREASTMILK

- Wash your hands before collecting your milk
- Use a clean container each time you express milk
- Breastmilk can be stored in BPA free plastic bottles, glass bottles, or bags made for storing breastmilk that seal well. Disposable bottle liners or sandwich bags are not recommended to store breastmilk as they break easily
- Leave a 1.5 cm (1/2 inch) space at top of the container so milk can expand when freezing
- Store in smaller amounts so you are not wasting your milk
- Label the container with the date you expressed your milk
- You may choose to hand express or use a pump

STORAGE OF BREASTMILK

Recommendations depend on where you store your breastmilk and the health of your infant. If your baby is in NICU or PICU, ask your health care provider about storage guidelines as they may be different.

- Keep your freshly expressed milk at room temperature for up to 4 hours. Once thawed to room temperature, discard after 1-2 hours.
- *Refrigerator*: optimal storage time is 4 days (at 4° Celsius). Under very clean conditions, it can be stored for 5-8 days. Keep the milk at the back of the fridge where it is coldest. Do not store in the door of the fridge.
- *Freezer*: storage time depends on the type of freezer used. Milk should be in the back of the freezer and away from freezer walls and bottom to prevent warming of milk.
 1. Separate freezer in fridge: 3-6 months
 2. Chest type freezer: 6 - 12 months



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Resources:

1. www.beststart.org
2. Toronto Public Health
Breastfeeding E-Learning

THAWING BREASTMILK

- Do not thaw your breastmilk at room temperature
- If it is thawed in the refrigerator, it is good for 48 hours
- Best ways to thaw your milk:

- place the container of milk in the fridge overnight
- run the milk under warm water
- set the milk in a container of warm water

Warning: Never microwave your milk as there may be hot spots

- Your stored breastmilk may taste, smell or look different than if it was fresh. Depending on what you have eaten, it may appear slightly blue, yellow or brown in color. It is still best for your baby!

PASTEURIZED DONOR HUMAN MILK

- Human donor breastmilk is the best choice for an infant if the mother is unable to use her own milk. It helps prevent severe infections in premature and sick infants.
- All potential donors must go through a screening process before they donate their milk. They are taught how to properly collect and store their breastmilk before it is distributed to the milk bank.
- Previously frozen pasteurized donor human milk can be thawed in the refrigerator for no longer than 48 hours. Once thawed, it cannot be refrozen.
- Ideal storage for frozen pasteurized donor milk in the freezer is 3 months.