

# Safe Storage and Preparation of Breastmilk

Pumping your breast milk ahead of time, ensures your baby is well-fed when you are away and can't breastfeed.

Follow this checklist for tips on how to safely store and prepare your breast milk.

DO: Store freshly expressed or pumped breast milk in bags or containers with tight fitting lids.

DO: Mark your bags or containers of breast milk with a date, so you know when the milk was expressed and stored.

DO: Store your breast milk in the refrigerator. Breast milk can be stored in the refrigerator for up to four days.

If you do not think you will use your breast milk within 4 days, freeze it right away.

DO: Freeze breast milk in small amounts of 2 to 4 ounces (or the amount that will be offered at one feeding) so you don't waste breast milk.

You can store your breast milk in the freezer for up to six months.

If you will be giving breast milk to your childcare provider:

DO: Clearly label the container with your child's name and talk to your childcare provider about other requirements they might have for labeling and storing breast milk.

DO NOT: Store breast milk in the door of the fridge, where the temperature can fluctuate. Place it toward the back of the refrigerator where the temperature is colder.

DO NOT: Leave breast milk out at room temperature for longer than six hours.

To safely warm and prepare your breast milk

DO: Thaw your breast milk in the refrigerator for several hours. If you need to speed up the thawing, put the container or bag under warm water or set it in a container of warm, not hot water.

Once your breast milk is thawed:

DO: Warm it up by running the milk under warm water.

DO: Make sure you stir the milk to ensure it's evenly warm and to mix the fats and other nutrients throughout the milk.

DO: Test your milk. Put a few drops on the side of your wrist. It should be body temperature warm, but not hot.

DO: Make sure to use your thawed or warmed breast milk within two hours. If you have any leftover milk when your baby is finished feeding, be sure to use within 2 hours, and throw out any remaining milk.

# Safe Storage and Preparation of Breastmilk

**DO NOT:** Use a microwave to thaw or reheat your breast milk. Microwaves do not heat evenly and create “hot spots” that could burn your baby.

**DO NOT:** Refreeze or refrigerate breast milk after it has been thawed.

For more information on the proper storage and preparation of breast milk, visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

Follow this checklist for ways to safely store and prepare your breast milk.