

STORAGE GUIDELINES

(if your child is premature, very ill, or not nursing, different guidelines may apply)

Containers Use any very clean container, preferably BPA-free (check the internet). Containers need not be sterile. If you use bags for freezing, it's suggested that you double-bag them and store them in a sealed container to protect them from puncture and to reduce freezer burn and "off" tastes. You may "layer" milk from several pumpings if you add cold to cold. Don't add warm milk to frozen milk.

Room temperature Up to 8 hours (possibly more). Fresh breastmilk, unlike formula, has living cells that work very hard to keep both milk and container clean, at least for a while.

Refrigerator Up to 5 days (possibly more). A term, exclusively breastfed baby has an immune system nearly as robust as his mother's, so you can feel comfortable using similar criteria.

Freezer Three to 6 months in a refrigerator freezer (possibly more). Keep milk toward the back, where temperatures are colder and more steady, but not on the bottom, where defrosting occurs. Up to a year (or more) in a 0° chest freezer without a defrost cycle. A "soapy" taste can sometimes develop in pumped milk, but doesn't seem to bother most babies. Call if it seems to be a problem.

Note: Don't combine maximum guidelines, e.g. don't leave at room temperature for many hours, then refrigerate for 5 days and then freeze. When in doubt, taste the milk. That's not perfect... but it's what we do with our own food.

Warming Run under warm water, swirl to mix. Don't microwave.

PUMPING HINTS FROM OTHER MOTHERS

Ideas for increasing your milk

Nurse more often or more effectively (check with a breastfeeding specialist).

Double pump instead of single pumping, for a total of not more than 20 minutes each time.

Pump more often, rather than pumping longer! If you're pumping exclusively, ideal would be 10 double-pumping sessions, for a total of about 140 minutes per day. But develop a schedule you can maintain. You want to be nursing 3 months from now, not pumping perfectly today.

Include breast massage in your pumping session, and end it with a couple minutes of hand expression This can make a huge difference in milk supply, especially during the first week or two post-birth.

Play relaxing classical music or a relaxation tape

Ask about taking fenugreek capsules or another "galactagogue"

For a day or two, do "power pumping" - pumping for 5 minutes every 45 minutes to an hour during the day

Throw in a little extra pumping whenever you have a little extra time, or whenever you start to leak

Hold the baby when you pump

Keep the pump settings comfortable. Discomfort means you're not at a setting that's right for *you*.

Find a comfortable flange. Flanges come in various sizes, and many women need one that's larger than standard.

If you've been double-pumping, try single pumping some of the time and focus on breast massage.

Ask about "galactagogues". Avoid sage (herb), peppermint, and Sudafed. Birth control pills may reduce supply.

Ideas to help with milk let-down

Nurse the baby on one side while you pump on the other, or hold the baby while you pump

Do some hand expressing first

Bend over and dangle your breasts as you shake and massage them

Put a cotton ball dipped in hot (not too hot!) water on your nipple, or a warm compress on your breast

Look at pictures of the baby, think about the baby, smell some of the baby's clothing

Don't think about the baby. Read a book, watch tv, or distract yourself in some other way

Get a back rub: Have someone rub knuckles briskly up and down either side of your upper spine

Stimulate your nipples by rubbing, rolling, or pinching them, or tug the skin at the base of your nipple

Pump as soon as you get out of a hot shower

Keep a bottle of baby shampoo or powder with the pump; open and sniff it before pumping