

## Storing Breast Milk

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Breast milk has components that prevent bacterial growth, and can be kept at room temperature for a long time (6-8 hours). Just like cow's milk and other milk from mammals, you can tell if the breast milk is spoiled by its distinct sour smell or sour taste.

When expressing milk, if you plan use it the next day or two, you can put it in the refrigerator. Otherwise, you can freeze it.



If you have breast milk in the refrigerator for a day or two that you haven't used, you can still freeze it.

When freezing milk, you can use a high quality plastic such as Tupperware, or the left over glass or plastic formula bottles from the hospital nursery. You can also use the freezer kits in breast pump kits.

Keep your breast milk in a separate container or large plastic bag in your freezer, to avoid cross contamination from frozen meat and poultry.

If you have a power outage and some of the foods in your freezer have begun to thaw, you can refreeze your breast milk. Don't throw it out. The benefits of breast milk are so great, and its antibacterial components will keep it from spoiling.

Location	Temperature	Duration	Comments
<b>Countertop, table</b>	Room temperature (up to 77°F or 25°C)	6–8 hours	Containers should be covered and kept as cool as possible; covering the container with a cool towel may keep milk cooler.
<b>Insulated cooler bag</b>	5-39°F or -15-4°C	24 hours	Keep ice packs in contact with milk containers at all times, limit opening cooler bag.
<b>Refrigerator</b>	39°F or 4°C	5 days	Store milk in the back of the main body of the refrigerator.
<b>Freezer</b>			Store milk toward the back of the freezer, where temperature is most constant. Milk stored for longer durations in the ranges listed is safe, but some of the lipids in the milk undergo degradation resulting in lower quality.
<b>Freezer compartment of a refrigerator</b>	5°F or -15°C	2 weeks	
<b>Freezer compartment of refrigerator with separate doors</b>	0°F or -18°C	3–6 months	
<b>Chest or upright deep freezer</b>	-4°F or -20°C	6–12 months	

Reference: Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine. (2004) [Clinical Protocol Number #8: Human Milk Storage Information for Home Use for Healthy Full Term Infants](#)  [PDF-125k] . Princeton Junction, New Jersey: Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine.

[http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling\\_breastmilk.htm#](http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm#)