

**These guidelines are for healthy full-term babies—  
babies born near their due date<sup>2, 3</sup>**

	Counter top or table	Refrigerator	Freezer with separate door	Freezer compartment within a small refrigerator <sup>1</sup>	Cooler with frozen ice packs
Temperature Ranges <sup>4</sup>	60-85° F (16-29° C)	39° F (4° C)	24° F (-4° C)	5° F (-15° C)	59° F (15° C)
Freshly Pumped Breastmilk	5 hours	5 days	5-6 months	2 weeks	24 hours
Freshly Pumped Breastmilk <i>(Pumped and held under very clean conditions and cooler temperatures)</i>	Up to 8 hours	Up to 8 days	8-12 months	2 weeks	24 hours
Thawed Breastmilk <i>(Previously frozen)</i>	1-2 hours	24 hours	Never re-freeze thawed breastmilk	Never re-freeze thawed breastmilk	Don't store
Thawed breastmilk <i>(Previously frozen—Pumped and held under very clean conditions and cooler temperatures)</i>	3-4 hours	24 hours	Never re-freeze thawed breastmilk	Never re-freeze thawed breastmilk	Don't store

There are many different milk storage guidelines.

Talk with your WIC staff, peer counselor or lactation specialist about which storage guidelines will work best for you and your baby.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Health and Human Services womenshealth.gov. "Breastfeeding." Last modified August 2010. <http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/>.

<sup>2</sup> Storage times and temperatures may vary for premature or sick babies. Check with your health care provider.

<sup>3</sup> Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine Protocol #8 Human milk storage information for home use for full-term infants (2010).

<sup>4</sup> Indicates maximum temperature unless otherwise noted.

## Congratulations on your commitment to providing breastmilk to your baby.

### Storing Breastmilk

- Wash bottles and pumping supplies in hot soapy water or in the dishwasher.
- Wash your hands before handling your breastpump kit and starting a pumping session.
- Breastmilk can be stored in clean glass or BPA-free\* plastic bottles with tight fitting lids.

**Note—** You can also use special breastmilk storage bags, which are made for freezing breastmilk. Don't use disposable bottle liners or other plastic bags to store your breastmilk.

\*Ask your WIC staff or health department about BPA-free bottles.

### After each pumping session

- Put the date on the container. If you are giving the breastmilk to your childcare provider put your child's name on it.
- Gently swirl the container to mix the breastmilk. It is normal for breastmilk to separate.
- Refrigerate or chill your milk after you pump it.

**Note—** Don't store milk on the shelves of the refrigerator door.

### Tips for freezing milk

- Leave an inch or so of space at the top of the container because milk will expand as it freezes.
- Store milk in the back of the freezer. Don't store milk on the shelves of the freezer door.
- Chill freshly pumped milk before adding it to frozen milk.<sup>2</sup>

### Tips for thawing and warming milk

- Use the oldest stored milk first.
- Breastmilk does not need to be warmed. It can be served at room temperature or cold.

**Note—** If you do warm your milk, swirl it (*don't shake it*). Test the breastmilk temperature by dropping some on your wrist. It should be slightly warm.

- Thaw frozen milk in the refrigerator overnight or under warm running water. You can also thaw milk in a container of warm water.
- Never put breastmilk in the microwave. Microwaving creates hot spots, which can burn your baby's mouth.
- Use thawed breastmilk within 24 hours. Never refreeze thawed breastmilk.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Health and Human Services womenshealth.gov. "Breastfeeding." Last modified August 2010. <http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/>.

<sup>2</sup> Human Milk Banking Association of North America. 2011.