



How to Store Breastmilk

Expressed or pumped breastmilk is easy to keep in the fridge or freezer.

- Breastmilk can be stored in clean glass or hard plastic containers (standard baby bottles; food storage containers with tight-fitting, solid lids), or in breast milk freezer bags. Refer to Health Canada for information on the safe use of plastic containers.
- Pour expressed milk into clean container. Leave space at the top of the container for expansion of milk if freezing (fill container $\frac{3}{4}$ full)
- Label container with the date the milk was expressed.
- Freeze milk you don't intend to use within 3 days. Cool milk first in fridge before freezing.
- You can add cooled milk to milk that is already in the fridge or freezer.

Milk Storage Guidelines:

Storage Time for Expressed Breast Milk	Room Temperature	Cooler with Ice Packs	Refrigerator *Store in the fridge not in the fridge door	Refrigerator Freezer (2 door refrigerator)	Deep Freeze
Fresh	4 hours	24 hours	3 days	6 months	Up to 12 months
Thawed in fridge, not warmed	4 hours	4 hours	24 hours	Do not refreeze	Do not refreeze

*Do not store milk that has been warmed

To thaw frozen breastmilk

- always use the oldest milk first
- thaw only what you need for one feeding
- thaw breastmilk by putting the container:
 - in the fridge, or
 - in a bowl of warm water
- DO NOT thaw breastmilk in the microwave

Breastmilk can separate when frozen, gently swirl to remix once it thaws.

To warm breastmilk for feeding

- an individual feeding can be warmed by:
 - standing the container briefly in warm water
 - DO NOT warm breastmilk in microwave or on the stove



**Vancouver Coastal Health is committed to helping women successfully breastfeed.
Please call your local Public Health Unit for additional information.**

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**Other information on parenting are available
at your local Community Health Office/Centre
or online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca>**

You can get further information about breastfeeding from:

Public Health Nurse or

Community Dietitian at Vancouver Coastal Health www.vch.ca

Baby's Best Chance <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/children/initiatives/bbc.html>

HealthLinkBC 8-1-1

Translation services are available in 130 languages www.healthlinkbc.ca

VCH Parenting Website parenting.vch.ca

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