

# Milk Storage Guidelines

Your milk can be stored in several different ways and can last anywhere from 72 hours to 12 months depending on where it is stored. The most common way of storage is with storage bags made specifically for breast milk, but there are also trays (similar to ice cube trays), and bottles. However you choose to store your milk, make sure that it is sealed tightly and is BPA free.

When storing milk do not fill the container to the top; as your milk freezes it will expand so leave room for that expansion. It is recommended to store 2oz-4oz at a time in order to avoid waste. Be sure to date the milk before storing it and use the older milk first to avoid having to discard it.

Place the containers at the back of the freezer or refrigerator where the temperature remains constant.

## Thawing Frozen Milk

When thawing or warming milk it depends on how quickly you need the milk and where it was stored.

Frozen milk should be thawed overnight in your refrigerator if possible, but if you need it quickly you can hold the container of milk under cool running water and slowly increase the heat.

If your milk was stored in the refrigerator you can choose to warm the milk by running warm water over it or by immersing the container of milk in a bowl of warm water.

**DO NOT WARM ON THE STOVE**

**DO NOT BOIL MILK**

**DO NOT WARM IN THE MICROWAVE**

If your milk separates (this is normal) simply swirl the milk to redistribute the cream. Do not shake.

If your frozen milk has been thawed it can then be stored in the refrigerator for 24 hours.

## Treating Mastitis

Some women report that their milk smells or tastes soapy. This is caused by the breakdown of fats in the milk. It is safe to use and most babies will drink it.

There may also be a rancid smell which is caused by the high lipase activity when the milk has been chilled or frozen. The milk can be heated to scalding (bubbles around the edge, not boiling) directly after expression, and quickly cooled and frozen.

If you have thrush you may continue to breastfeed and pump as usual, but once it has cleared you will need to throw out any milk that was expressed during the infection.



*Jessica Fibbe*  
Birth & Breastfeeding Services