

Breastmilk Refrigeration and Storage Guidelines

For Child Care Providers

Location	Temperature*	Duration	Instructions
Countertop, Table, Warmed or Room Temperature	Room Temperature (up to 77°F)	1 hour	Work toward not reheating milk; instead help baby become accustomed to room temperature milk.
Refrigerator	<41°F	24 Hours (1 day**)	Store milk in the back of the main body of the refrigerator.
Freezer Compartment Inside Refrigerator	5°F	2 Weeks	Store milk toward the back of the freezer where the temperature is most constant. Milk stored for longer durations in the ranges listed is safe, but some of the lipids in the milk can undergo degradation, resulting in lower quality.
Freezer Compartment Attached to the Refrigerator	0°F	3-6 Months	
Deep Freezer	-4°F	6-12 Months	

*Check temperatures with a thermometer according to your program's policy.

**Formula or breast milk that is unopened and not used the day it was prepared or received from the parent or guardian must be discarded or returned to them at the end of the day. This does not apply to frozen breast milk.

References

Rules and Regulations Governing the Health and Sanitation of Child Care Facilities in the State of Colorado. 6 CCR 1010-7, Page 29-30, 7.12.3 C and E. Feeding Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards. Page 171, STANDARD 4.3.1.9 Warming Bottles and Infant Foods.

For Parent/Guardian*

Location	Temperature	Duration	Instructions
Countertop, Table (for freshly expressed milk)	Room Temperature (up to 77°F)	6-8 hours	Store containers covered and keep them as cool as possible; covering the container with a cool towel may keep milk cooler.
Insulated Cooler Bag	5-39°F	24 hours	Keep ice packs in contact with milk containers at all times; limit how often the cooler bag is opened.
Refrigerator	39°F	5 days	Store milk in the back of the main body of the refrigerator.
Freezer Compartment Inside Refrigerator	5°F	2 Weeks	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 can undergo degradation, resulting in lower quality.
Freezer Compartment Attached to the Refrigerator	≤0°F	3-6 Months	
Deep Freezer	-4°F	6-12 Months	

* For use with healthy, full-term infants.

References

Adapted from InfaNET Nutrition for Child Care Providers. Retrieved on 4/7/16: <http://www.unco.edu/nhs/infanet/BMStorage.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2010. *Proper Handling and Storage of Human Milk.* http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm.

Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (2004) Clinical Protocol Number #8: Human Milk Storage Information for Home Use for Healthy Full-term Infants. Princeton Junction. New Jersey: Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine.

Breastmilk Storage and Preparation

Breastmilk is precious; every drop helps babies to grow up healthy. Follow these guidelines to ensure that you're getting the most out of the supply provided for the infants in your care.

Storage

1. Breastmilk and infant formula in bottles or other storage containers must be:
 - Labeled with the infant's name.
 - Differentiated by colored labels.
 - Labeled with the date received.
 - Stored at 41°F or below.
2. If the infant's supply of breastmilk runs out, contact the parents so they can bring more to the program.
3. Refrigerate or freeze breastmilk as soon as the parents bring it to the program. It does not need to be in a separate refrigerator, but bottles with the earliest date should be used first (i.e. first in, first out). Recommend that moms freeze their pumped milk in small quantities (1-3 ounces) to avoid waste.
4. Throw away breastmilk if it is:
 - Brought to the program in a dirty bottle.
 - Left unrefrigerated for an hour or more.
 - Not finished by the infant within one hour from the beginning of the feeding. This is important because harmful bacteria can grow within this time.
5. Breastmilk or formula that is unopened and not used the day it was prepared or received from the parent or guardian must be discarded or returned to them at the end of the day. This does not apply to frozen breastmilk.

Preparation

1. Always wash your hands before and after handling breastmilk.
2. All breastmilk and formula must only be used for the intended child. Breastmilk should be differentiated by colored labels or another method approved by Boulder County Public Health.
3. Breastmilk is a food, not a bodily fluid; therefore, gloves do not need to be worn when feeding breastmilk to an infant. In addition, gloves do not need to be worn when cleaning up spilled breastmilk; however, you should always wash your hands afterwards.
4. Bottles of breastmilk can be served cold. If you choose, warm them under running, warm tap water, or place them in a container of warm water (no warmer than 120°F).
 - If using a slow cooker to warm breastmilk, keep it out of reach of infants and not warmer than 120°F. Bottles should not be left in warm water for more than five minutes; doing so can allow bacteria to grow.
 - Frozen breastmilk can also be thawed quickly in a container of warm water (no warmer than 120°F). If not for immediate use, frozen breastmilk can be thawed under cold running water or in the refrigerator.
 - Breastmilk or formula in a bottle should NEVER be warmed in the microwave – this can cause “hot spots” in the bottle that could burn the infant.
5. After warming, mix the breastmilk by gently swirling the milk in the bottle. Excessive shaking of breastmilk may damage some of the nutrients that are important for infants. It may also create increased foaming, which can cause an infant to take in excess air and make them more gassy.
6. Test the breastmilk on your forearm to make sure it's not too warm.

Cleanup

1. Bottles, bottle caps, nipples, and other equipment used to feed breastmilk from a bottle can be cleaned and sanitized by washing them in a dishwasher or by washing, rinsing, and sanitizing them in an approved dishwashing sink. If bottles are not cleaned at your program, place all bottle parts into plastic bags for the parents to take home.
2. If using a slow cooker to warm breastmilk, empty, clean, sanitize, and refill it with fresh water daily.