

## STORAGE AND HANDLING OF BREASTMILK

Use this chart as a basic guide for storing your milk.

	<b>Deep Freeze</b> (0°F/-18°C)	<b>Refrigerator Freezer</b> (variable 0°F/-18°C)	<b>Refrigerator</b> (39°F/4°C)	<b>Cooler with Ice Packs Frozen</b> (59°F/15°C)	<b>Room Temperature</b>	
					(66°F-72°F) (19°C-22°C)	(72°F-79°F) (22°C-26°C)
Fresh	Up to 12 Months	3-4 Months	8 Days	24 Hours	6-10 Hours	4 Hours
Frozen, Thawed in Fridge	Do Not Refreeze	Do Not Refreeze	24 Hours	Do Not Store	4 Hours	4 Hours
Thawed, Warmed, Not Fed	Do Not Refreeze	Do Not Refreeze	4 Hours	Do Not Store	Until Feeding Ends	Until Feeding Ends
Warmed, Fed	Discard	Discard	Discard	Discard	Until Feeding Ends	Until Feeding Ends

\*Storage times may vary for premature or sick babies. Sources: Jones, F. and M.R.. Tully, Best Practice for Expressing, Storing and Handling Human Milk in Hospitals, Homes and Child Care Settings. Raleigh, NC: Human Milk Banking Association of North America, 2006; Mohrbacher, N. and J. Stock, The Breastfeeding Answer Book. Schaumburg, IL: La Leche League International, 2003.

- Milk should not spoil before the times listed above, but the longer milk is stored, the more nutritional value is lost.
- The living parts of a mother's milk, the antibodies, cells and other immune factors, kill bacteria, making it much harder and longer-lasting than formula.
- Breastmilk keeps fresh longer both at room temperature and in a refrigerator than formula.
- *The more research is done, the more liberal are the guidelines*— If two guidelines conflict, the more up-to-date report is usually less strict

### How Much:

- Store in small quantities, smaller than the usual feeding, so that none gets wasted.
- Start with 1 and 2 oz containers for younger babies; for older babies, 2 and 3 oz containers, or the smallest the baby has recently taken, and a few 1 oz's to top off with.
- Baby can always go back for more
- Breastmilk is golden, don't waste it by mixing it with formula (However it won't hurt either baby or milk if you do)
- Let baby have any available breastmilk first, then if still hungry and there is no breastmilk left, use formula

### General Guidelines for chilling milk:

- Do not add warm milk to cold milk before refrigerating. (It's ok to add warm to cold if feeding immediately, if not chilling or warming again)
- Chill milk in refrigerator before combining bottles.
- You can add refrigerated milk to frozen milk.

### Warming and Defrosting Milk:

- Place in larger container with hot water to warm or defrost.
- Do not microwave (hot spots are dangerous) Warming any food rapidly causes any germs to multiply. Antibodies in breastmilk protect baby and lower the level of germs. However, warming and defrosting more than once means many more germs. So, do not warm or freeze any food, including breastmilk, more than once.

#### **What if we took it out and didn't use it or didn't finish it?**

- Milk removed from the refrigerator but still cold can be returned to the refrigerator.
- Milk that has been warmed but not fed can be left out at room temperature for the next feeding within 3 or 4 hours. Do not rewarm.
- Or it can be refrigerated and fed cold if the baby doesn't mind (older babies)
- Milk that baby has started but not finished technically should be tossed out, as the research on this hasn't been done yet. If you and your baby are healthy, use common sense, don't chill or rewarm it, use it up within a few hours. Breastmilk is golden. (Next time use smaller bottles and top off if necessary.)