

Collecting, storing, and transporting your breast milk

Collecting your breast milk

- Wash your hands and under your fingernails thoroughly before each pumping session.
- Gather your equipment: personal breast pump kit, clean milk container and lid, label. (If your baby is in the hospital, the nurse will provide labels and a sterile milk container and lid.)
- Pump your breasts. If your baby is in the hospital, pump your milk directly into the sterile containers you were given. If your baby is at home, use bottles that have been cleaned with hot soapy water.
- Leave a small amount of air (space) at the top of the bottle.
- Seal your container with a clean lid, or – if your baby is in the hospital – with the sterile lid you were given. Write the date and time of the pumping on a label, and put the label on the bottle. If your baby is in the hospital, make sure your baby’s name is also marked clearly on the label. If you are taking any medications, write the name of the medication on the label.
- Put your breast milk in the refrigerator (or freezer) right away.
***Important:** Do not combine milk that was pumped at different times.

Cleaning your equipment

- Only the pumping pieces that come in contact with your breast and/or your milk need routine cleaning. (That is, the flange, collection bottle, and valves.) For routine pumping at home, follow the manufacturer’s directions for cleaning the pump parts.
- **If you are using a pump at the hospital**, the nurse will give you a pumping kit. It must be cleaned **after each use**, as follows:
 - Please use castile soap provided by your nurse.
 - The nurse will give you a pink hospital basin to use for cleaning. Clean the materials in the basin, not the sink. Wash the flange, valves, and collection bottle in hot, soapy water. Rinse thoroughly and dry equipment and basin with paper towels.
 - Store equipment upside down on a paper towel in the basin to ensure thorough drying.

Storing and transporting your breast milk

- Carry your fresh or frozen breast milk in a small portable cooler, an insulated bag, or a plastic bag packed tightly with ice or an ice pack. Pack frozen milk carefully so it doesn’t defrost.
- Use the guidelines below for storing milk. Guidelines differ depending on whether your baby is in the hospital or at home.
- When defrosting milk, write the date/time it came out of the freezer on your label.
- Milk left over in your baby’s bottle after a feeding must be discarded within one hour of when it was brought to room temperature. Do not put leftover milk back in the refrigerator or freezer.

	Baby is in the hospital	Baby is at home
Milk at room temperature	Use within 1 hour	Use within 5 hours
Fresh milk in refrigerator (milk that has NOT previously been frozen)	Use within 48 hours	Use within 5 days
Milk in freezer	Use within 3 months	Use within 12 months
Milk defrosting in the refrigerator	Use within 24 hours	Use within 24 hours