



Women's, Infants, and Children
Supplemental Nutrition Program

Department of Public Health
City and County of San Francisco

Storing Your Breast Milk

Containers

- ☐ Breast milk should be stored in clean containers, such as:
 - glass bottles
 - food-grade plastic bottles (such as baby bottles)
 - milk storage bags
 - Tupperware® containers
- ☐ Before using, wash bottles in hot, soapy water.
- ☐ Rinse well with hot water either by hand or in the dishwasher.
- ☐ Let bottles air dry on clean paper towels.
- ☐ Store milk in small amounts (such as two or four ounces) so that milk is not wasted if the baby does not drink it all. Leave a 1-inch space at the top of the bottle because the milk will expand when frozen.

To Store

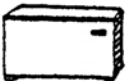
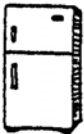
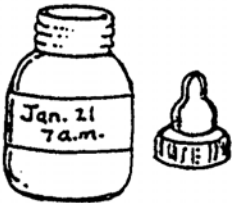
Freezing milk:

- ☐ Close the bottle. Do not touch the inside of the bottle with your hands.
- ☐ Label the bottle with the date and time the milk was expressed.
- ☐ Cool milk in the refrigerator for 1 hour before placing in the freezer, if possible.
- ☐ Put the bottle in the freezer. Use the back of the freezer, it is coldest.

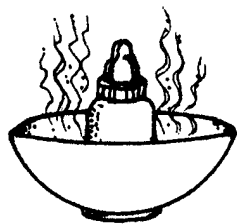
How long to keep milk:

Outside the refrigerator	In the refrigerator	Freezer compartment inside the refrigerator	Freezer with a separate door	Stand alone freezer
4 hours	3 days	2 weeks	4 months	6 months

- ☐ It is important to check the dates the milk was pumped. Use the oldest milk first (use milk from three weeks ago before last week's milk).
- ☐ If possible, always store breast milk in the refrigerator or the freezer. If you do not have a refrigerator, talk with a WIC staff person about safe storage of breast milk.



To Warm Frozen Milk



- ☐ In the evening, move the milk you plan to use the next day from the freezer to the refrigerator. Once the milk is thawed use it within 24 hours.
- ☐ Place the bottle with milk in a bowl of warm (not hot) water. Swirl the bottle until the milk is thawed.
- ☐ **Do not microwave breast milk! Microwaves do not heat evenly and the milk may have hidden hot spots.** Microwaves can also destroy some of the nutrients in the milk.
- ☐ If needed, try holding a bottle of frozen milk under cold, then warm running water until it reaches room temperature.

Breast Milk Left-Over After Feeding

- ☐ Do not save milk you have thawed to room temperature and did not use.
- ☐ Throw away any warmed breast milk that is left after a feeding.

To Transport Frozen Breast Milk

If you are expressing milk for a hospitalized infant, ask hospital staff for special guidelines you may need to follow. To transport milk from a freezer in one location to another (for example from home to hospital or to the babysitter's freezer), keep milk in an ice chest with ice or a cold-pack to prevent partial defrosting.

For breastfeeding questions, pump loans, classes, or other help, call your WIC Clinic.

Standards for participation in the WIC Program are the same for everyone regardless of race, religion, national origin, color, sex, political beliefs or handicaps. Persons believing they have been discriminated against may write to: Secretary of Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington D.C. 20250.
Developed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health WIC Program, Rev., 8/2002.