Expressing and Storing Breast Milk

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EXPRESSING



Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before expressing breast milk.

Make sure all parts of the breast pump are clean. Clean the pump and its accessories as necessary.



Collect expressed breast milk in a breast milk storage bag or a clean, food-grade container. Glass or plastic containers with tight-fitting lids are suitable.

If you express breast milk in hospital, label the container with your name and the date of expression.



For milk expressed at home, label the container with the date of expression and the amount of milk.

Store breast milk at the back of the refrigerator or freezer, rather than in the door.

FREEZING:



Freeze breast milk in small portions of 60–110 ml to avoid waste.

Leave approximately 2.5 cm of space at the top of the container, as breast milk expands when frozen.

If you do not plan to use freshly expressed breast milk within 4 days, freeze it as soon as possible.

THAWING:



To thaw breast milk, place the sealed container in a bowl of warm water or transfer it from the freezer to the refrigerator the night before and allow it to thaw overnight.

Do not thaw or heat breast milk in a microwave, as this can destroy some of its beneficial nutrients.

Once thawed, gently swirl the milk to mix in any fat that has separated.

BREAST MILK STORAGE	AT ROOM TEMPERATURE (UP TO 25 °C)	IN THE REFRIGERATOR (4 °C)	IN THE FREEZER (–18 °C OR BELOW)
Freshly expressed breast milk	Up to 4 hours	Up to 4 days	6 months
Thawed breast milk	1–2 hours	Up to 1 day (24 hours)	Thawed breast milk MUST NOT be refrozen
Breast milk left over after feeding	Use within 2 hours after feeding your baby		

