

# Pumping and Storing Milk



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Pumping is a great solution for women who want to go back to work, or who want to give their milk to their babies without being physically there. It does take some time to get used to the whole process, but once established, it is very easy to maintain your milk supply as long as you wish and have it as a practical solution for not being there with your child. Below is some important information to get you started.

## Handling and Storing Your Milk

Human milk has amazing protective properties and lasts much longer than formula milk. Here are some guidelines for storing your breastmilk\*:

**Freshly expressed or pumped milk:**  
At room temperature.... 4 hours  
In a refrigerator..... 4 days  
In a freezer ..... 6 months

**Thawed milk:**  
At room temperature.... 24 hours  
In a refrigerator..... 1-2 hours

\* Based on the CDC 2021 guidelines

- Once you are done with pumping, close the recipient, label the bottles with the date the breastmilk was collected, and store in the fridge or freezer.
- You do not need to store breastmilk in a separate refrigerator or separate compartment, but better put all your storage in one area, deep inside the fridge or freezer.
- You do not need to wear gloves to store or give a bottle of breastmilk.
- Thaw breastmilk either by taking it down from the freezer and placing it in the fridge the night before or a few hours before.
- Once thawed or placed in the fridge, breastmilk separates into layers. Swirl gently to mix layers back together.
- Thawed breastmilk can be kept in the refrigerator for 24 hours. Do NOT refreeze it.
- When thawing frozen breastmilk, look at the labeled storage date or your bottles, and take down the bottle with the earliest date, so that you ensure your remaining stock is always within the acceptable storage date limits.
- If storing your milk in the fridge, do not place it in the door where temperature fluctuations occur.
- Babies prefer breastmilk at 37°C, however some end up getting used to having it at room temperature if you gradually get them used to it.

When heating breastmilk, place the bottle for a few minutes in a hot water recipient or in a special electric bottle warmer.

- Never microwave breastmilk, nor heat it directly on the stove.
- After a feeding, if you still have some unused breastmilk left in the bottle, you can leave it at room temperature and reuse it within 1-2 hours, you can also mix it with a newer batch of milk, or else you need to discard it. Many moms find that storing milk in smaller quantity can help reduce waste if the baby does not finish the bottle.

## When and How Often Should You Pump?

The ideal time to pump for many women is usually in the morning, because this is usually when they have the highest milk supply. Try to pump after you have fed your baby. Once you are away from your baby, you should try to time the pumping sessions when your baby is also feeding.

## How Much Should You Pump?

The quantity of milk usually extracted per session varies greatly between mothers, so don't worry if you are pumping less than your friends or neighbours. Roughly a typical range between 90 ml and 150 ml per feeding session once you have not pumping for few hours is considered normal. After the 6th month or when baby starts to eat solid food, baby's milk intake may begin to decrease, but breastmilk should still provide the majority of baby's nutrition through the first year.

## How to Wash Bottles and Other Equipment

It is preferable to sterilize all pumping equipment after every wash. Follow instructions on your sterilizer to understand how it functions. Another more basic way of sterilizing is by immersing the bottles and equipment in boiling water for 5 minutes then letting them air dry over a clean cloth.

## Choosing Your Pump

There are 2 kinds of pumps on the market, the manual and the electric. Both are equally effective at pumping the milk. The electric one pumps faster with less efforts, however it is bulkier than a manual pump if you need to carry it to work. If you are serious about breastfeeding, both are good, but try to choose a good brand that will be able to extract efficiently your milk and help you maintain your supply.

## Going Back to Work

If you are going back to work, you need to build a small stock BEFORE, so start pumping once or twice every day for 2-1 weeks ahead to build your supply for the 1st few days at work. Once at work, try to time the pumping sessions when your baby is eating (30-15 minutes). You will find the whole process logistically tiring at first, but soon enough it will become a well established routine.

back and forth. Whenever you are close to your baby, it is best to directly breastfeed him/her, this will help you maintain your milk supply at a maximum.



If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to call us at:

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