

Guidelines for Expressing and Storing Milk

Mothers' Milk Bank of Tennessee provides lifesaving donor milk to the most critical infants. Therefore, it is imperative that each donor mother follows the following guidelines at all times so that we can provide the safest donor milk possible. Please report any illness or new medications to Mothers' Milk Bank of Tennessee. We will discuss relevant deferral dates- temporary or permanent with you..

Please follow these guidelines:

- **Wash your hands.** Don't touch your clean pump parts until you wash your hands. Once you wash your hands, don't touch anything else to avoid cross-contamination.
- **Sanitize pump parts:** Pump parts must be washed with soap and running water after **each use**. Place parts on a clean towel to air dry them completely. Pump parts should also be sanitized daily. This can be done by placing pump parts on the top shelf of your dishwasher or placing in 180 degree Fahrenheit water for 10 minutes. Pump cleaning wipes do not adhere to the Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA)'s milk storage guidelines, as they do not reach into all the internal surfaces of the pump's parts and may leave residue which is unsafe for medically fragile babies.
- **Transfer milk:** Pumped milk should be transferred from the pump containers into milk storage bags and refrigerated immediately.
- **Label Containers:** Containers must be labeled above the bag seal line using a permanent marker with the full date (including the year) that the milk was pumped, your last name and donor number.
- **Storing Milk:** Milk should be stored in approved plastic storage containers (BPA free bags) and placed in the freezer as soon as possible, toward the back of the freezer where the temperature is colder and more stable. "Stacking," "layering," or combining milk from more than one pumping session should be done only when the milk is the same temperature (i.e. all milk being combined is refrigerated). Mixing warm milk with cool milk is an opportunity for bacterial growth in the milk. Make sure all milk that is to be combined over

multiple pumping sessions have been in the refrigerator for at least 30 mins. Label this combination bag with the oldest date of milk pumped. Store all milk in a milk storage bag designed for breast milk storage. Bags not specifically designed for breast milk storage may not be sterilized in the same way as milk storage containers.

- **Transportation:** When ready to transport milk to the nearest [Milk Drop Depot](#), place individual milk storage bags in a large Ziplok style bag. Label this larger bag with your last name, donor number and date of oldest milk in the large bag. Place bags of milk in a cooler with ice packs. Breastmilk must be frozen from the time it is pumped and remain frozen until it is delivered by you to a [Milk Drop Depot](#).
- **Ask for help.** If you are ill or have to take any medication, mark the bags from your pumping session appropriately, and ask Mothers' Milk Bank of Tennessee if the milk is eligible for donation or if you should keep it for your own child.

Storage: The Human Milk Banking Association of North America (HMBANA) is the recognized expert when it comes to this subject. HMBANA recommends:

- **“Room temperature** for 1 – 4 hours” – Room temperature is generally recognized as approximately 70 degrees F. If it is possible to move the milk into a cold or refrigerated place sooner, that is best.
- **“In the refrigerator** (+/- 40 degrees F) from 24 – 96 hours” = 1-4 days. Store milk for donation no longer than 96 hrs in the Refrigerator before moving to the freezer.
- **“In the freezer door for 7 days”** – Long term storage in the door of the freezer is not recommended because the temperature does not get cold enough, but it does freeze milk and food.
- **“Up to 9 months at -20 C = 4 F”**. A deep freezer is a separate unit that is only a freezer and the best place to store breast milk if you think it may be there long term.

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