

## Guidelines for Expressing and Storing Milk

The Mother's Milk Bank of Tennessee provides lifesaving donor milk to the most critical infants. Because our recipients are so vulnerable to infections, they need the safest possible breast milk, therefore we are extra conservative with donor milk expressing and storage guidelines.

### **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.
- **Sterilize pump parts:** Pump parts must be washed with soap and running water after **each use**. Place parts on a clean towel to air dry or use a fresh, clean towel or paper towel to 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 190 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 must be labeled using a permanent marker with the full date (including the year) that the milk was pumped, your last name and donor number.

(Guidelines for Expressing and Storing Milk cont'd)

- **Storing Milk:** Milk should be stored in the freezer as soon as possible, toward the back of the freezer where the temperature is colder and more stable. Ideally, only one pumping session should be stored in each milk storage bag, although it is fine to combine milk from both breasts into one bag. “Stacking” or “layering” (i.e. - adding freshly pumped (warm) milk to milk already refrigerated or frozen) is **not allowed** for donation, as this is an opportunity for bacterial growth in the milk. However, milk that has been refrigerated for 30 minutes can be mixed together with milk that has been pumped in the past 4 days and is in the refrigerator, before freezing the entire bag. Store milk in a container designed for breast milk storage, either a bag or bottle. Bags not specifically designed for breast milk storage may not be sanitized the same way as milk storage containers.
- **Transportation:** When ready to transport milk to the nearest depot or to the Milk Bank, place milk in a bag labeled with last name and donor number and place in a cooler with ice packs. Your milk needs to be delivered to the Depot/Milk Bank in a completely frozen state.
- **Ask for help.** If you are ill or have to take any medication, mark the bags from your pumping session appropriately, and call and ask the milk bank if the milk is eligible for donation or if you should keep it for your own child.

(Guidelines for Expressing and Storing Milk cont'd)

## **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 4 – 9 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, that is best.
- **“In the refrigerator (+/- 40 degrees F) from 24 – 192 hours”** = 1-8 days. Research has been done on refrigerated milk for this length of time at this temperature and milk is still good. The longer the storage, the more chances for spoiled milk.
- **“In the freezer for 7 days”** – This is the freezer that is a separate door in your fridge. Long term storage is not recommended because the temperature does not get cold enough, but it does freeze milk and food.
- **“Up to 8 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.