Guidelines for Pumping, Storing and Transporting Breastmilk

BREASTFEEDING HELPLINE: calls answered daily 320-251-2700 Ext. 52311

How to pump and then bottle feed breastmilk
- Breastfeed 10-12 times a day OR if ONLY pumping and bottle feeding breastmilk, then empty the breast by pumping 10-12 times in a 24 hours period for 10-15 minutes with at least one nighttime pumping between midnight and 6 a.m. Pump 2 minutes beyond the last drops, not more than 30 minutes of pumping.
- Wash your hands well with soap and water.
- Find a relaxing position, massage your breasts, apply warm moist packs.
- Apply your clean breast-pump system. Regulate suction to highest comfortable setting
- For anyone pumping, wash accessory parts of breast pump that come in contact with breastmilk using warm soapy water, rinse and air dry after each use.

How to store breastmilk
- 6-10 hrs at room temperature for fresh or thawed milk due to ability to retard bacterial growth.
- If your baby is in the NICU, refrigerate breastmilk as soon as possible.
  - In the refrigerator for 48 hours if freshly expressed.
  - In the refrigerator for up to 24 hours after thawing. (1-5°C/34-40°F)
  - In an “inside refrigerator freezer” for up to 2 weeks. (-4°C/20-28°F)
  - In a separate door freezer for up to 3 months. (-12°C/5-15°F)
  - In a deep freezer for up to 1 year. (-20°C/0°F or below)
- You can add refrigerated milk to milk that is already frozen (just be sure the amount you are adding is smaller than the amount already frozen and the milk was cooled at least 30 minutes in the refrigerator before adding so it does not thaw frozen milk.). Allow room for expansion when filling containers for freezing. Do not tighten caps until milk is completely frozen.
- Do NOT layer milk from separate pumping sessions, if your baby is in the NICU.

How to thaw and warm breastmilk
- Thaw frozen breastmilk in the refrigerator. If necessary, it may be thawed rapidly by holding container under cool to lukewarm running water, or gradually in a bowl of warm water for ½-1 hour. Be careful not to contaminate with tap water. Do NOT thaw in microwave.
- Breastmilk should only be warmed to approximate body temperature. This can be done rapidly by holding container under lukewarm running water, or gradually in a bowl of warm water for ½-1 hour. (Take care not to contaminate milk with water. Do not overheat. Do NOT heat breastmilk in a microwave, excessive heat destroys valuable nutritional and anti-infective properties.)
- Shake gently before feeding to remix the creamy portion that separates during storage.
- Breastmilk that has been used for bottle feeding should be discarded after 1 hour at room temperature due to contamination from saliva.
- Always notify the Lactation Consultant, hospital staff or health care provider if you are ill or taking any medication

How to transport breastmilk for your NICU baby
- Transport breastmilk in a cooler with freezer gel packs.
- Place fresh breastmilk to be used within 48 hours in refrigerator.
- Place newest frozen breastmilk in the back of the freezer.