

Human Milk Storage: Guidelines for Child Care Facilities

Note: These guidelines are for childcare facilities only, and are stricter than home milk storage guidelines.

| North Carolina Guidelines: | | |
|---|--|-----------------|
| | Refrigerator | Freezer |
| Freshly expressed milk | Up to 24 hours | Do not freeze |
| Frozen milk from home | Up to 24 hours | Up to 7 days |
| Previously frozen, thawed in refrigerator, but not warmed | Up to 24 hours | Do not refreeze |
| Previously frozen, brought to room temperature | Send home or discard, per feeding plan | Do not refreeze |

| National Guidelines* (to be used where supported by state guidelines): | | |
|--|--------------|------------|
| | Refrigerator | Freezer |
| Freshly expressed milk | 5 days | 3-6 months |

*These guidelines are in keeping with best practices described in *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards, Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, 3rd Ed. (2011)*. Individual states may have regulations that differ, so be sure you know what rules apply to your center.

References: Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine Protocol Committee. 2010. Breastfeeding Med 5:127-30. and "Proper handling and storage of human milk – Storage duration of fresh human milk for use with healthy full term infants."

Important Reminders

- o The CDC classifies human milk as a FOOD, not a bodily fluid. It is not considered a biohazardous substance.
- o To prevent the spread of germs, wash your hands before preparing any bottle.
- o All human milk containers should have the child's name, the date received, and the date thawed.
- o An unfed bottle of human milk can be left at room temperature for up to 2 hours if brought from home, and up to 4 hours if freshly expressed at the child care center.
- o Thaw and feed the oldest milk first.
- o Do not refreeze previously-frozen human milk.
- o **NEVER** use a microwave to thaw or warm human milk.
- o Return all thawed and frozen milk to the child's parent/guardian, or discard, as indicated in the family's feeding plan.



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In Collaboration With:
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