

# Storing breast milk

Any container that can be sterilised and sealed is suitable for storing expressed breast milk including:

- glass containers
- plastic containers
- small sealable plastic bags.

Most of these containers should also be suitable for freezing. Frozen breast milk expands in the container so only fill to three quarters of the container to prevent it from bursting.

Ensure containers are sterilised before collecting expressed breast milk.

## Important information about storing expressed breast milk

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before handling breast milk
- Store freshly expressed breast milk in the most appropriate way using the guide below
- Freeze milk that will not be used within two days
- Label your containers with the date and time of collection
- Use the oldest milk first.

## Guidelines for storing breast milk:

Breast milk	Room temperature (26°C or lower)	Refrigerator (5°C or lower)	Freezer
Freshly expressed into container	6-8 hours Store milk in refrigerator if possible	3 days Store at the back where it is coldest	2 weeks in freezer compartment inside refrigerator 3 months in freezer section of refrigerator with separate door 6-12 months in deep freeze (-18°C or lower)
Previously frozen - thawed in refrigerator but not warmed	4 hours or less (the next feeding)	24 hours	Do not refreeze
Thawed outside refrigerator in warm water	Use immediately - complete the feed	4 hours or until next feeding	Do not refreeze

