

START RIGHT



EAT RIGHT

Recommended procedures for storing, thawing and warming of breast milk

Storing Breast Milk

- Expressed breast milk (into a clean sterile container) should be date labelled (date of expression) and refrigerated at 4° C or lower at the back of the fridge where it is coldest. Breast milk that will not be used within two days should be frozen.
- If the baby has begun feeding, any unused breast milk should be discarded
- Tips for parents: Breast milk should be transported to childcare in an esky with a freezer brick, and placed immediately in the back of the refrigerator upon arrival.

Frozen breast milk

- Frozen breast milk can be kept for 2 weeks in the freezer compartment of a one door refrigerator, or 3 months in a freezer section of a fridge with separate door.
- If some milk has thawed it should be used within 24 hours. Do not refreeze it.
- Tips for parents: Breast milk should be transported to childcare in an esky with a freezer brick, and placed immediately in the back of the refrigerator upon arrival (or in the freezer if still frozen and to remain so).

Thawing frozen breast milk

- Breast milk can be thawed in the fridge or at room temperature in a warm water bath.
- Breast milk that has been thawed in the fridge but not warmed should be used within 24 hours, and should not be refrozen.
- Breast milk that has been thawed outside the fridge in warm water can be used immediately, or stored in the fridge for up to 4 hours.

Warming Breast Milk

- Breast milk should NEVER be microwaved. It destroys the immunological properties in the breast milk.
- Breast milk should be warmed by standing the bottle in warm water.
- Bottle warmers can be used, but they must have a thermostat control. Bottles should only be warmed in this way *for less than 10 minutes*.
- Before giving the child a drink from the bottle:
 - put the teat/bottle top back on, and invert the bottle at least 10 times
 - make sure the breast milk is cool to touch - test by placing several drops on the back of the hand.

Recommended procedures for storing, thawing and warming of infant formula

Storing Infant Formula

- Infant formula should be name and date labelled and stored immediately in the centre at the back part of the fridge where it is coldest (not in the fridge door where it is warmer).
- Discard the contents of *partially used* bottles after 1 hour. Reusing half empty bottles is risky once they have been heated and sucked on.
- Throw out any *unused* formula after 24 hours.
- Tips for parents: the safest way to transport formula is to take the cooled, boiled water and the powdered formula in separate containers and mix them when needed. When it is necessary to transport prepared formula (or expressed breast milk) it must be icy cold when leaving home and be carried in an insulated pack to keep it cold.

Warming Infant formula

- Microwaving infant formula is not recommended by the NHMRC for safety reasons, they do not heat the milk evenly and may create hot spots in the milk which could burn the baby's mouth.
- Formula should be warmed by standing the bottle in warm water (not boiling).
- Bottle warmers can be used, but they must have a thermostat control.
- Bottles should only be warmed *for less than 10 minutes*.
- If a centre decides to use a microwave to warm *formula* (i.e. *breast milk* should *not* be microwaved), the following guidelines are recommended to minimise the risk of hot spots and overheating:
 - Make sure the bottle is microwave-safe.
 - Make sure there is at least 120 mls of formula in the bottle (otherwise it will overheat).
 - Heat only cold formula straight from the refrigerator.
 - Always stand the bottle upright.
 - Always take off all the teat/bottle top assembly and leave these *outside* the microwave.
 - Do not use microwave ovens with a wattage over 700W.
 - For a 120 ml size bottle - use high setting and heat for less than 30 seconds.
 - For a 240 ml size bottle - use high setting and heat for less than 45 seconds.
- Before giving the child a drink from the bottle:
 - put the teat/bottle top back on, and invert the bottle at least 10 times
 - let the bottle sit for 1-2 minutes before testing the temperature, as the formula can keep heating even though the microwave has finished
 - make sure formula is cool to touch - test by placing several drops on the back of the hand or wrist.

References:

- Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia (National Health & Medical Research Council, 2003)
- Infant Feeding Guidelines for Health Workers (National Health & Medical Research Council, 2003)
- Feeding and nutrition of Infants and Young Children (World Health Organisation, 2000)
- Child and Youth Health www.cyh.com.au
- Bottle Feeding (Children's Youth and Women's Health Service, 2008)
- Australian Breast Feeding Association Guidelines.