New Mexico Breastfeeding Task Force

Storing Breastmilk
A Guide for Parents

Remember

• Always wash your hands before pumping milk.
• Cool milk before freezing it. When adding newly expressed milk to frozen milk, cool it first.
• Label containers with today’s date if you won’t be using the milk right away.
• Tightly close container or seal breastmilk storage bags.
• Do not refrigerate or freeze bottle nipples.
• Store 2-4oz of milk per container. Small amounts thaw more quickly.
• When freezing milk, do not fill containers more than 3/4 full to allow room for the milk to expand.
• Never use a microwave to thaw or heat breastmilk. Thaw or briefly warm milk under warm running water.
• Gently mix (don’t shake) breastmilk after thawing.
• Put 2-4oz of milk in a bottle to feed your baby. Milk left over from a feeding should be thrown out if not finished within one hour.
• Do not re-freeze breastmilk.
• Bring home unused breastmilk from your child caregiver; re-label and use the next day.

FRESHLY EXPRESSED breastmilk can be stored

• 6-8 hours at room temperature (77° F). Throw away leftover milk, if not used that day.
• 5 days in the refrigerator
• 3-6 months in the freezer section of a refrigerator
• 6-12 months in a deep freezer
• 24 hours in a cooler bag with ice packs

THAWED breastmilk guidelines

• If thawed in the refrigerator, use within 24 hours.
• If thawed on the counter or under running water, use within 4 hours.

If you plan to use a bottle to feed your breastmilk to your baby, ideally wait until breastfeeding is going well & your milk supply is established (may take up to 4-6 weeks).

For more information, contact your WIC office, La Leche League, a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor, or a Lactation Consultant.
This has been sourced from the CDC & adapted from NMWIC in collaboration with the New Mexico Breastfeeding Taskforce. www.breastfeedingnewmexico.org

Label Example:
Name: Joanie Esparza
Date: 03/03/15
Date Expressed: 03/02/15