

GRAB AND GO LESSON

Handling Pumped Breastmilk: Receiving, Storing, and Preparing

Topic Area: Nutrition and Meal Management
Subtopic Area: Infant Feeding

Objective: Recall how to receive, store, and prepare pumped breastmilk in child care.

Using good food safety practices is essential when handling pumped breastmilk. The way that it is handled can impact its nutrient qualities. Improper handling can cause nutrients to breakdown, reduce the overall freshness, and ultimately make the breastmilk unsafe for infants to drink. Therefore, it is essential to follow good safety practices when receiving, storing, preparing, and serving pumped breastmilk.

How to Receive Pumped Breastmilk?

When receiving pumped breastmilk, ensure that the bottle or packaging has the child's full name (first and last), contents, dates, and the time it was pumped. Also, ask the family member or guardian about the type of milk. For example, is it freshly expressed or pumped, thawed or previously frozen, or leftover from a feeding that the baby did not finish? This information is essential for knowing just how to store it properly.

How to Store Pumped Breastmilk?

Based on the date and the breastmilk's form, use the following chart to store it properly.

Breastmilk Form	Countertop 77°F or colder (25°C) (room temperatures)	Refrigerator 40°F or colder (4°C)	Freezer 0° F or colder (-18° C)
Freshly expressed or pumped	Up to 4 hours	Up to 3 days	Within 6 months is best Up to 12 months is acceptable
Thawed, previously frozen	1–2 hours	Up to 1 day (24 hours)	Never refreeze breastmilk after it has been thawed.
Leftover from a feeding (baby did not finish the bottle)	Use within 2 hours after the baby is finished feeding or discard.		Never refreeze breastmilk after it has been thawed.

How to Prepare/Thaw Pumped Breastmilk?

When you are ready to serve pumped breastmilk, there are four key ways to properly prepare/thaw pumped breastmilk.

- Always wash hands properly before handling pumped breastmilk (or formula).
- Use the FIFO Method. Over time, breastmilk can reduce in quality. Always use the oldest breastmilk first to promote freshness and nutrient-richness.
- Thaw milk by placing it in the refrigerator overnight, setting the bottle in a container of warm or lukewarm water, or holding under lukewarm running water.

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- Carefully warm milk. You can serve pumped breastmilk cold from the refrigerator and do not need to warm it. However, if you choose to warm the bottle, follow these three steps to warm refrigerated pumped breastmilk:
 - o Use a bottle warmer or hold the bottle under warm running water, making sure the temperature does not go above 98 °F.
 - o Gently swirl the bottle, but do not shake.
 - o Check the temperatures before serving—the liquid should be body temperature or lukewarm.
 - o Never warm a bottle of breastmilk (or formula) in a microwave, as it can create hot spots and burn an infant's mouth.

Following these good practices are essential for safely serving pumped breastmilk to infants. Remember, your efforts to create safe meals can have a major impact on the overall health and wellness of infants. For additional information, refer to the CACFP 02-2018: *Feeding Infants and Meal Pattern Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program: Questions and Answers*.

References:

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