

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" available from <http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/>.

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.