

STORAGE AND HANDLING OF HUMAN MILK

Guidelines apply to mothers who:

- A. Have healthy full term infants
- B. Are storing milk for home/site use as opposed to hospital use
- C. Wash their hands before expressing
- D. Use containers that have been washed in hot, soapy water and are well rinsed
- E. Use containers especially designed for storing and freezing human milk
- F. Guidelines for human milk storage differ if a baby is ill or premature. Refer to WIC more detailed guidelines.

Human Milk Storage

- A. In a refrigerator at 32 to 39 degrees F for 5-7 days
- B. In a freezer container located inside a refrigerator for two weeks
- C. In a self-contained freezer unit for 3 months
- D. In a separate deep freezer at a constant 0 degrees F six (6) months

Dating of Milk

- A. Each mother will label each container with the month, date, year, and name.
- B. Milk will be used in the order in which it was expressed

Choices and Use of a Storage Container

- A. For storage, use polyethylene or polypropylene (recycling symbols 1, 2 or 5) bottles or plastic bags specifically made for the storage of human milk (such as Medela CSF bags).
- B. Leave at least 1" at top of container for expansion during freezing.

Thawing Frozen Milk and Warming Refrigerated Milk

- A. To thaw frozen milk, hold container under cool running water and gradually add warmer water until milk is thawed and heated to room temperature.
- B. Human milk should not be heated directly on a stove. It may be placed in a pan of warm (not boiling) water.
- C. Human milk should not be heated in a microwave oven as valuable components will be destroyed if heated greater than 130 degrees F.
- D. Previously frozen milk that was thawed can be safely refrigerated for up to 24 hours. Never refreeze thawed milk.