



New Mexico Breastfeeding Task Force

Human Milk Storage & Handling

Milk Storage Guidelines

Location	Temperature	Duration	Comments
Countertop	Room Temp (up to 77°F)	6-8 hours	Containers should be covered and kept cool. Cover with a cool towel to help keep it cool.
Insulated Cooler Bag	5°F - 39°F	24 hours	Keep ice packs in cooler and next to milk containers. Limit the number of times you open the cooler.
Refrigerator	39°F	5 days	Store milk in the back of the refrigerator.
Freezer compartment inside refrigerator	5°F	2 weeks	Store milk in back of the freezer where it is coolest. Frozen milk stored for longer times is safe, but may not be as nutritious.
Refrigerator/freezer combo with separate doors	0°F	3-6 months	

Guidelines for Child Care Facilities

- Check that each bottle is labeled with today's date, child's name and date milk was expressed. Labels should be written with a permanent marker. Refrigerate milk right away.
- Thawed milk may be briefly warmed in bottle warmer or under warm running water. Never use microwave to thaw or warm milk. Use oldest milk first.
- Gently mix (don't shake) breastmilk before feeding.
- It is not necessary to wear gloves when handling breastmilk unless there is blood in the milk. Always wash your hands to prevent the spread of germs.
- Unfinished bottles of breastmilk should be discarded after one (1) hour.
- Unused milk can be stored up to 72 hours in a child care center or returned to child's parent or guardian.



For more information contact your WIC Office, Lactation Consultant, LLL or Breastfeeding Peer Counselor. Adapted from the Louisiana Breastfeeding Coalition's Supporting Breastfeeding in Child Care Centers Program in collaboration with the New Mexico Breastfeeding Task Force www.breastfeedingnewmexico.org. Sourced from CDC.