



TEN STEP TUESDAY

# Fun Facts about Milk Storage & Handling, Week 2

## It's Ten Step Tuesday!

### Why Do Milk Storage Guidelines Differ?

Adapted from Nancy Mohrbacher, IBCLC, FILCA

## Human Milk Storage Guidelines

### STORAGE LOCATIONS AND TEMPERATURES

TYPE OF BREAST MILK	Countertop 77°F (25°C) or colder <i>(room temperature)</i>	Refrigerator 40°F (4°C)	Freezer 0°F (-18°C) or colder
Freshly Expressed or Pumped	Up to 4 Hours	Up to 4 Days	Within 6 months is best Up to 12 months is acceptable
Thawed, Previously Frozen	1–2 Hours	Up to 1 Day <i>(24 hours)</i>	NEVER refreeze human milk after it has been thawed
Leftover from a Feeding <i>(baby did not finish the bottle)</i>	Use within 2 hours after the baby is finished feeding		

These guidelines are for healthy full-term babies and may vary for premature or sick babies. Check with your health care provider.

Find more breastfeeding resources at: [WICBreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov](http://WICBreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov)  
[www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/](http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/)



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While most milk storage guidelines are very similar, you will notice slight differences between recommendations of the ABM, the CDC and HMBANA. Which guidelines are right? Why don't the experts agree? Here are some things to consider:

### “Ideal” vs. “Acceptable”

You will often see times for refrigerated and frozen milk are noted as “Acceptable” or “Ideal.” Within the “Acceptable” times, expressed milk should not spoil. Between “Ideal” and “Acceptable,” the

milk is still good, but more vitamins, antioxidants, and other factors may be lost. While it is always better to use milk sooner rather than later, but it should not spoil within the “Acceptable” time frames.

### Your Situation Makes a Difference

- Many guidelines are intended for full-term, healthy babies at home. If your baby is hospitalized, milk storage guidelines are likely shorter than these. Preterm and sick babies are more vulnerable to illness, so pumping and storing recommendations may be stricter. For details on hospital milk storage, look for the Lippincott procedure called “Human Milk Handling & Care.”
- If your baby gets most milk directly from the breast, you don't need to worry about whether the small amount of expressed milk she gets is fresh, refrigerated, or previously frozen. If a large percentage of baby's milk intake is pumped milk, consider your choices more carefully. Freezing kills antibodies, so rather than freezing all of your pumped milk, feed as much fresh or refrigerated milk as possible. But even without the antibodies, frozen milk is still a far healthier choice than formula.

In the hospital setting, our greater concern should not be whether the milk can be left out for 4 or 6 hours, but that we encourage families to offer that colostrum to the baby as soon as feasible!

For more information contact

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