



Human Milk Storage and Use at Home

Whānau/Family Information – Neonatal Services

The guidelines for human milk storage times for a pēpi (baby) in the Neonatal Unit (NICU) are the same as the guidelines for well and healthy full-term pēpi at home.

STORAGE CONDITIONS	STORAGE TIME	HANDY HINTS
In a room (< 26°C)	4 hours	Cover the breastmilk and keep in the coolest place possible.
In the fridge	3 days	Store milk at the back of the fridge.
Frozen		
• Freezer box in fridge	• 2 weeks	Use the frozen breastmilk to mix with your baby's food when you introduce this from 6 months.
• Separate fridge/freezer	• 3 to 6 months	
• Deep chest freezer	• 6 to 12 months	

Reference: <https://www.healthinfo.org.nz/index.htm?Breast-pump-breast-milk-storage.htm>

Equipment for collecting breastmilk

As your pēpi is in the Neonatal Unit (NICU) the following equipment should be used:

- In the first few days, use the sterile syringes in the colostrum pack provided to you by Maternity or Neonatal Unit staff.
- As your supply increases, use the sterile bottles provided in Maternity or Neonatal Unit. These are single use bottles. After use, the bottles can be discarded in the recycling bins once the name label has been removed.

Hygiene and safety

1. Always wash your hands and wipe down the NICU breast pumps before and after expressing. You do not need to wipe down your loan pump at home.
2. Label and date the expressed breastmilk with labels provided by the Neonatal Unit reception staff.
3. Do not mix milk together from different expressions. However, you can place the milk into one bottle from the same expression if double pumping.
4. Avoid over filling the bottles as liquids expand when frozen.

Decontamination of baby feeding and expressing equipment

(Pacifiers, breast pump flanges and attachments, feeding cups, bottles and teats that belong to baby on discharge. Anything that comes into contact with expressed milk formula or pēpi/baby's saliva.)

This excludes NICU bottles which are single use and not for reprocessing.

Expressing equipment and electric breast are provided to you as you discharge home from the hospital. You will need to provide your own storage containers.

Bottles, teats and feeding cups should be thermally (microwave) disinfected **AFTER EVERY USE.**

Expressing equipment and pacifiers should be thermally (microwave) disinfected **TWICE A DAY.**

Instructions on how to disinfect equipment can be found in the parent milk rooms in NICU and on your expressing equipment pack for home. Also, a QR code to a video can be found in the clinical areas of NICU and at the end of this document.

Transporting breastmilk to the hospital

Fresh

- Keep milk in the fridge until ready to visit the hospital.
- Use a chilly bin or chiller bag with an ice pack to keep chilled milk cool during the journey.

Frozen

- Store in home freezer then transport frozen in a chilly bin or chiller bag to go into hospital freezer.

Thawing frozen expressed milk

- Thaw frozen expressed human milk slowly in the fridge. If you need to thaw more quickly, place the container of frozen expressed milk in a container of warm (not hot) water.
- Never use a microwave to thaw or warm expressed milk. It destroys some of the properties of expressed human milk and heats the milk unevenly.
- Gently swirl or shake before testing milk temperature on the inside of your wrist.

Using thawed expressed milk

- Use the oldest-dated expressed human milk first.
- Use any thawed milk within 24 hours. Do not refreeze.
- Once warmed, use within one hour. Do not reheat.

For further information and breastfeeding support beyond your hospital stay:

CanBreastFeed



Mama Aroha app



HealthInfo

