These guidelines are for healthy, full-term babies. If your babies are in an NICU or have been recently discharged home from an NICU, please consult with your local hospital to ensure that your handling & storage of pumped breast milk meets hospital requirements. If you have concerns about any of your babies, check with your babies' physician, a lactation consultant, other healthcare professional or doula.

Sterilization

- Purchase some bottles to store the milk and labels for the bottles. These containers should be BPA free plastic or glass bottles. Milk storage bags can also be used. It is easy to write the collection date right on the bag. There are also bags designed to store breast milk, which often come with the purchase of a breast pump.

- Boil and sterilize bottles and lids before each use.

- Make sure all pump material is properly cleaned and sterilized between uses.

Storage

Properly storing breast milk is essential to ensure the health of your babies.

- Clearly label each bottle or bag, including date and time that the breast milk was collected so that you know the age of the bottle or bag of milk.
- Do not overfill the bottles or bags as breast milk expands when it is frozen.
- Avoid waste by storing breast milk in 60-120 ml (2-4 ounce) containers, which thaw quickly.

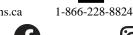Here are the current guidelines for proper storage:

	What temperature is it?	How long can you store it?
Freshly expressed milk	Room temperature up to 25°C or 77°F	4 hours
Refrigerated milk (store at back of fridge, not in the door)	4°C or 39°F	Fresh milk - for 48 hours Thawed milk - for 24 hours
Frozen Milk (store at back of freezer, not in door. DO NOT REFREEZE)	Freezer compartment inside of refrigerator	2 weeks
	Freezer compartment with separate door	3-6 months
	Deep freezer, not attached to refrigerator	12 months
Transporting Milk (fresh, refrigerated or frozen)	Packed in insulated cooler with ice or frozen gel packs (15°C or 60°F)	24 hours

Keep in mind that the above are guidelines only; if you have any doubt about the milk, discard it.

www.multiplebirths.ca   1-866-228-8824

@multiple_births   MultipleBirthsCanada   @multiplebirthscanada

SUPPORT   EDUCATION   RESEARCH   ADVOCACY

Using Stored Breast Milk

- Breast milk will separate as it stands. Gently swirling the container will easily mix it back together.

- **DO NOT MICROWAVE BREAST MILK**. Microwaving changes the nutritional content of the milk.

- Breast milk is quickly defrosted in a bowl or saucepan of hot water (from the tap). It needs to be room temperature for the babies' use. To check if the milk is warm, put a couple of drops on the inside of your wrist. If it feels hot on your wrist, then it is too hot to be given to an infant.

- **DO NOT REFREEZE THAWED BREAST MILK**

References

www.breastfeeding.hypermart.net/storagehandling.html

http://breastfeeding.about.com/od/lactation/a/storage.htm

Recommended Sources of Information

MBC Breastfeeding Support Network

http://multiplebirthscanada.org/index.php/parents/support/breastfeeding-support-network

Documents and Articles

Multiple Births Canada Fact Sheets on various multiple birth related topics

Multiple Birth Families www.multiplebirthsfamilies.com

Kelly Mom – Breastfeeding and Parenting www.kellymom.com
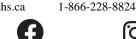
Multiple Births Canada
Lynda P. Haddon, Multiple Birth Educator, revised 2013

www.multiplebirths.ca   1-866-228-8824

@multiple_births   MultipleBirthsCanada   @multiplebirthscanada

SUPPORT   EDUCATION   RESEARCH   ADVOCACY

All materials provided by Multiple Births Canada are for **information** only and do not constitute medical advice. Multiple Births Canada /Naissances Multiples Canada is a Registered Charity.
BN# 895390110 RR0001