Pumping and Storing Breast Milk for the Healthy Baby

Why express your milk
Breastfeeding mothers may need to express breast milk for many reasons, including:
- Mother and baby are apart a long time
- Mother is ill
- Breasts become over-full or engorged
- Baby is not able to latch on
- Mother returns to work or school

When to remove milk
Start expressing as soon as you miss a feeding. Do not wait until you are getting full or engorged.
Begin to collect and save milk within the first hour after delivery to collect your first milk, if your baby is not latching on, or you are separated from your baby.

Pumping
- Use a pump of your choice. There are many kinds, including electric or hand pumps. If you are returning to work or will be away from your baby for a long time, an electric pump may be better.
- You can rent electric pumps from different providers.
- Follow the pump’s instruction manual.
- Before you start, wash your hands with soap and water. If you are not able to, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that has at least 60% alcohol.

Choosing a Breast Flange Size
A breast flange, or shield, is a small plastic cover that fits over your nipple and areola to create the suction that pulls the milk out of your breast. It is used with a breast pump. Getting the right fit is important to get the best seal. Your lactation consultant can help.

Too Small - Nipple rubs along the side of the tunnel. Try a larger size.
Too Large - Nipple and much of areola are pulled into tunnel. Try smaller size.
Correct Fit - Nipple is in the center of the tunnel and moves freely during pumping.
Storing breast milk

How Long to Store
When using with healthy full term infants:

- Room temperature:
  6 to 8 hours (up to 77°F).

- Insulated cooler bag:
  24 hours. Use ice packs in contact with milk containers and limit opening bag (5 to 39 °F).

- Refrigerator:
  5 days in freezer compartment of fridge with separate doors. Store milk in the back of the main body of the refrigerator (39°F or colder).

- Freezer:
  3 to 6 months for freezer compartment of refrigerator with separate doors. Store in coldest part of the freezer (0°F or colder).
  6 to 12 months for chest or upright deep freezer (-4°F).

Source: Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine

What to Store It In

- Breastmilk can be stored in clean glass or hard BPA-free plastic bottles with tight-fitting lids.
- You also can use milk storage bags, which are made for freezing human milk. Do not use disposable bottle liners.
- Be careful not to touch the inside of the liner or bottle, so the milk will not get bacteria in it.
- Seal all containers right away after the milk is collected.

When Ready to Use

- When breast milk is stored, it is normal for the milk to separate into layers. Gently tip the bottle up and down to mix the milk before giving it to baby.
Going back to work or school

For mothers who are returning to work, this checklist can help you to pump or hand express successfully.

- Start pumping once a day for at least 2 weeks before you return to work. This is in addition to breastfeeding your baby. This will help you build up a freezer supply.
- Bring all of your supplies with you every day, which may include:
  - Cooler bag for keep your milk
  - Bags or bottles for storing milk
  - Breast pump, if you use one
  - Soap or wipes to wash your hand and pump parts
- Clean pump parts after each use. Follow the pump instruction manual for cleaning. Microsteam bags may also be used to sterilize items if needed. These are small plastic bags that use steam. You just add water and heat in the microwave. You can buy them at many stores.
- Know where the closest place to pump is. Many worksites and other public places have a room just for breastfeeding mothers to pump or hand express.

Thawing breast milk

- Thawed breast milk should be refrigerated and used within 24 hours.
- Thaw breast milk under warm tap water. Do not boil or microwave breast milk. High temperatures destroy the antibodies that are important to keeping your baby healthy.
- When milk is thawed, gently shake and swirl the bottle to mix the milk.
- Do not refreeze breast milk that has been completely thawed.