

Transporting breastmilk

- Use an insulated container with a freezer brick.
- If frozen milk remains frozen, put it in the freezer on arrival.
- If frozen milk has thawed, put it in the refrigerator and use it within 24 hours. Do not re-freeze.
- If the milk has never been frozen, you can either store it in the refrigerator or freeze it if you wish, following the guide above.

Microwaving breastmilk

- The recommended way to warm breastmilk is to stand it in a container of warm to hot water.
- Microwave ovens have been used to thaw and/or heat breastmilk but many guidelines recommend that this is not done.
- The major problem with microwave ovens is that they **cause uneven heating**. The temperature of the surface may be a lot hotter or cooler than the rest of the milk.

For more information contact:

- **Local Community Child Health Nurse**
They can also refer you to your local Lactation Consultant. See inside your baby's purple 'All About Me' book (page 8), in the phone directory under 'Child Health Centres', or www.health.wa.gov.au
- **Australian Breastfeeding Association Helpline**
Phone 1800 686 2 686*
www.breastfeeding.asn.au
- **Ngala Helpline**
8:00am–8:00pm seven days a week
Phone (08) 9368 9368
Outside metro area – Freecall 1800 111 546*
www.ngala.com.au
- **Local family doctor**

* Calls made from a mobile phone may be charged at a timed rate.

To order this publication and others, phone 1300 135 030 or visit www.health.wa.gov.au

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Warning

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breastfeeding
expressing
& storing
breastmilk



Expressing is done when you need to have some milk for your baby because you aren't going to be there for a feed, or if your breasts are very full and uncomfortable. You can express after a feed or instead of a feed.

Expressing

Expressing by hand costs nothing and you don't need any equipment. It may empty your breasts more completely than using a breast pump.

To hand-express

1. Wash your hands using soap and running water. Dry them completely with a clean, dry towel.
2. Have a sterile container, such as a small bowl or large cup ready to collect the milk (see the section 'Storing breastmilk' below for information on sterilising containers).
3. Gently massage the breast towards the nipple:



4. Then place the end of your forefinger (index finger) and thumb on either side of areola (the brownish area around the nipple), near outer edge and opposite each other.



5. Squeeze together, in and back, let go and repeat at about the rate your baby sucks.
6. Change the position of your finger and thumb to gradually work around the breast.
7. Expect the milk to take a minute or so to start coming.

Using a breast pump

- Using a pump to express may be faster than doing it by hand.
- You can get many different hand pumps or electric pumps.
- They all need to be cleaned thoroughly between uses; see the information that comes with the pump.
- If you need to express often, you may be able to hire an electric pump from a pharmacist.
- If your nipples are sore or cracked, you may find that hand expressing is less painful.
- To express with a pump:
 1. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and running water. Dry them with a clean, dry towel.

2. Gently massage your breasts, stroking towards the nipple.
3. Place the cup of the pump on your breast with the nipple in the centre.
4. Work a hand pump with a smooth and rhythmic action.
5. For an electric pump, start with low suction strength and gradually increase to find the most effective and comfortable level for you.
6. If your pump has an attachment to express both breasts at once, you may find this quicker and more effective.

How often and how much?

- Try to express 30 mL or so after feeds (especially morning feeds) for a few days and store the milk following the directions below.
- As a rough guide, a baby of 1–3 months may take 100–180 mL for a feed, but it is very variable.
- If you will only be away for a few hours, don't worry if you don't have a lot of milk to leave. You and your baby will be keen to have a good breastfeed when you return.

Storing breastmilk

- Sterilise the containers that you are going to express milk into and store milk in. Make sure they are clean first, then boil them for five minutes, soak in sterilising solution or use a steam steriliser (e.g. microwave steriliser).

- Express milk straight into sterilised containers.
- Store milk in sterilised plastic or glass. Plastic is better for freezing.
- Cover the container and keep it in the **back** of the refrigerator where it is coldest (not in the door).
- Milk stored in the refrigerator is best used within 48 hours, but it will keep up to 3–5 days if necessary.
- Frozen milk will keep for two weeks in a freezer section inside a one-door fridge, or for three months in the freezer section of a fridge with a separate door, and for 6–12 months in a separate deep freeze (write the date on a label on the container).
- You can add more breastmilk to a container in the freezer if you chill it in the fridge first. It will only keep for as long as the oldest milk in the container.

Thawing and warming breastmilk

- Thaw milk slowly in the refrigerator or more quickly in warm water.
 - If it is thawed in the fridge, it will keep for 24 hours in the fridge.
 - If it is thawed in warm water, use it straight away or put it back in the fridge for no more than four hours.
 - Do not re-freeze thawed milk.
- Once a baby has started to feed from a bottle, throw away any milk left after about an hour.

