

HAND EXPRESSION AND CONTAINER

HOW TO

ACTION

Prepare a container for expressed breast milk

- Choose a small cup, jug or jar with a wide mouth.
- Wash the cup in soap and water.
- Pour boiling water into the cup and leave it for a few minutes.
- When ready to express milk, pour the water out of the cup.
- Use a small syringe (without a needle) or a spoon if colostrum is being expressed. If a mother can only express a few drops, it can be difficult to collect in a cup. A helper can collect it with a syringe directly from the nipple and it can be given to the baby directly from the syringe.

Express breastmilk by hand

- Thorough hand hygiene.
- Sit or stand comfortably and hold the container near her breast.
- Puts her thumb on her breast above the nipple and areola, and her first finger or first two fingers on the breast below the nipple and areola, opposite the thumb. She supports the breast with her other fingers.
- Presses her thumb and first finger or first two fingers slightly inwards towards the chest wall. She should avoid pressing too far, or she may block the milk ducts.
- Presses her breast behind the nipple and areola between her first finger or first two fingers and thumb. She should press on the larger ducts beneath the areola. Sometimes in a lactating breast, it is possible to feel the ducts. They are like pods, or peanuts. If she can feel them, she can press on them.
- Press and release, press and release. If it hurts, the technique is wrong. At first no milk may come, then milk starts to drip out. It may flow in streams if the oxytocin reflex is active.
- Press in the same way from the sides, to make sure that milk is expressed from all segments of the breast.
- Avoid rubbing or sliding her fingers along the skin. The movement of the fingers should be more like rolling.
- Avoid squeezing close to the nipple press behind it. Pressing or pulling the nipple itself cannot express the milk. It is the same as the baby sucking only the nipple.
- Express one breast for at least three to five minutes until the flow slows; then express the other side; and then repeat both sides. She can use either hand for either breast or change when they tire.
- Explain that to express breast milk adequately takes 20–30 minutes, especially in the first few days when only a little milk may be produced. It is important not to try to express in a shorter time.

STORING EXPRESSED BREAST MILK

MILK STORAGE GUIDELINES

LOCATION OF STORAGE	TEMPERATURE	MAXIMUM RECOMMENDED STORAGE
Room temperature	16–29°C (60–85°F)	• 4 hours is optimal • 6–8 hours is acceptable under very clean conditions
Refrigerator	~4°C (39.2°F)	• 4–8 days is optimal • 5–8 days under very clean conditions
Freezer	<-4°C (24.8°F)	• 6 months is optimal • 12 months is acceptable

- If storing several containers, each container should be labelled with the date. Use the oldest milk first.
- Put the expressed breast milk into a container, cover it, and put it in as cool a place as possible. The amount of expressed breast milk put into one container should not be more than the amount needed for one feed.
- If the amounts of milk expressed are small, add more to the same container during that one day, but not after that.
- A baby should consume expressed milk as soon as possible after expression. Feeding of fresh milk (rather than frozen) is encouraged.
- Frozen breast milk may be thawed slowly in a refrigerator and used within 24 hours. It can be defrosted by standing in a jug of warm water and used within one hour, as it is warm. Do not boil milk or heat it in a microwave as this destroys some of its properties and can burn the baby's mouth.

- Eglash A, Simon L, The Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine. ABM Clinical Protocol #8: human milk storage information for home use for full-term Infants, revised
- 2017. *Breastfeed Med.* 2017;12:390–395. doi: 10.1089/bfm.2017.29047.aje