

How to Handle Donor Human Milk *in the Hospital*



Mothers' Milk Bank

WHEN YOU RECEIVE THE ORDER



CHECK THE ORDER

1. Check bottles to look for any damage from shipping and handling.
2. Compare the quantities and types of milk received to the packing slip to ensure accuracy of your order.

If there are any order discrepancies or damage, report immediately to Mothers' Milk Bank at 303.869.1888



FREEZE THE MILK

1. Place all bottles in the freezer immediately.
2. We recommend checking expiration dates on both new bottles and any you already have in your freezer. Those with upcoming expiration dates should be used first. Because expiration dates are based on when the milk was pumped, not when our lab receives it, they do not always chronologically coincide with distribution dates.

WHEN YOU ARE READY TO THAW THE MILK



PREFERRED METHOD

The best way to thaw is in the refrigerator, though it takes longer. Place the milk you plan to use in the next 12-24 hours in the refrigerator and mark with the date/time of defrosting. **It will take 12-24 hours to thaw.**



QUICK METHODS

Thaw milk using a commercial milk thawing tool, such as the Ameda Penguin Warmer. Follow all manufacturer's instructions for thawing.

OR

1. Place milk in a clean bowl of warm water, keeping water level below the bottle lid. As the water cools, replace with warm water.
2. Swirl the bottle gently as the milk thaws.
3. Thaw just long enough to be pourable, but still cold.

WHEN YOU ARE READY TO USE THE MILK

Log the feeding according to your hospital's record system. Include the lot number on the milk bottle in your records.



Milk must be used within 48 hours of thawing.



Never use a microwave to thaw or warm human milk.

Thawed, warm milk should be discarded if it has been at room temperature for more than one hour. Milk not finished at one feeding may be put back in the refrigerator promptly after the feeding and used within the next two hours. Never add this milk to a "new" bottle of thawed milk. Any remainder should be discarded if not used within two hours.

How to Handle Donor Human Milk *in the Hospital*



Mothers' Milk Bank

1. Upon delivery, please check the condition of the milk. Is it frozen? Are any bottles broken? If there are any problems, call Mothers' Milk Bank immediately.
2. Frozen donor human milk should be stored in a freezer that is maintained at a temperature no higher than -18°C or 0°F (based on Best Practices for Expressing, Storing and Handling Human Milk in Hospitals, Homes, and Child Care Settings, 2019, [Human Milk Banking Association of North America](#)).
3. Record-keeping for banked donor milk should be as meticulous and accurate as for medications. Include the lot number and volume dispensed to the patient, and any other information required by your facility.
4. Before defrosting the milk, check the expiration date on the label. Do not use milk if it is past the expiration date.
5. For ideal defrosting:
 - › Place the amount of milk to be used within the next 12 – 24 hours in the refrigerator over night, if possible. Refrigerator temperature should be maintained at less than 4°C or 40°F .
 - › Mark the milk with the date and time of defrosting. Milk is fully thawed when there are NO ice crystals present. Use within 48 hours from time of defrosting.
 - › Pour out the amount needed for a feeding, and warm only that portion no warmer than body temperature before feeding. If the quick thaw method is used for a feeding, swirl for even fat distribution, and pour off milk desired for a feeding. Place any remaining cold milk into the refrigerator and use within 48 hours of defrosting.
 - › If a bottle of donor milk has been prepared for a feeding, but baby falls asleep before feeding, it can still be used. Immediately place milk in the refrigerator and use within 48 hours.
 - › If the baby starts the feeding but doesn't finish the milk, the milk should be placed in the refrigerator immediately and used within the next two hours.
6. To quick-thaw, place the bottle of frozen milk in a clean container of warm water. Change the warm water from time to time as it cools. Another option is to hold the bottle under warm running water. The water level must remain below lower edge of bottle lid for both methods. Do not overheat the milk. The milk should never be warmer than skin temperature. Hospital electric milk warmers are acceptable, if the milk is kept below 98.6°F .
7. Do not thaw or heat milk in the microwave.
8. Do not thaw milk at room temperature.
9. Thawed milk will separate as the fat forms a layer on top. Gently swirl it to mix before feeding.
10. Do not refreeze milk that has been thawed. Thawed, warmed milk should be discarded if it has been at room temperature for more than one hour.
11. Milk used for continuous push feeds must be discarded after four hours.