

## COLLECTING AND STORING HUMAN MILK

### **To Store Human milk for Later Use:**

- Breastmilk from different pumping sessions can be combined as long as the sessions were on the same day and all the milk is cold. Refrigerate breastmilk immediately after pumping.
- If the milk will be frozen, leave space for it to expand. Freeze the milk on the same day it was pumped.
- If the refrigerator has a separate door for the freezer, breastmilk can stay in the freezer up to 3 months. Place breastmilk in the back of the freezer but not near the fan.
- Breastmilk can stay in a chest-type deep freezer (0° F.) for up to six months.

### **General Guidelines:**

- Read and follow the instructions that came with the collection kit.
- Before pumping, wash hands thoroughly using water and soap, and clean nails with a nailbrush. Rinse well.
- Immediately after pumping, use cold water to rinse all pump parts that touched the milk. Then clean them in hot soapy water and rinse well or wash in the dishwasher. Make sure hands are clean before assembling the parts.
- Use clean containers; they do not have to be sterilized unless instructed by a healthcare provider to do so. It is best to collect the milk, store, and feed from the same container so that the milk is not handled too much.
- The best containers for breastmilk are glass or hard plastic. Plastic bags specially made for breastmilk storage are also available.
- For newborn babies, put only 1½-2 ounces of milk in each container. For older babies, the bottles can contain 3-4 ounces. This will reduce waste if baby does not take the whole amount. Small quantities also thaw faster.
- Put the date the milk was pumped and baby's name on a label on each bottle of breastmilk.
- Breastmilk is not homogenized, so the cream will rise to the top as it sits. Shake the bottle gently to mix the cream with the rest of the milk.
- Once breastmilk has been warmed or baby has started drinking from the container, whatever milk is not used within one hour should be discarded.

### **Thawing Breastmilk:**

- To thaw it fast, hold it under cool running water.
- Milk can also be thawed in the refrigerator. Once thawed, use within 24 hours or throw it out.
- Do not thaw breastmilk at room temperature. Do not refreeze thawed breastmilk.

### **To Warm Breastmilk:**

- Hold the container under lukewarm running water or set it in a container of warm water for a few minutes.
- Never warm breastmilk on the stove or in the microwave.
- Do not make breastmilk hot. Babies can drink cool breastmilk.

**Getting Ready to Pump:**

- Get something to drink and maybe a healthy snack.
- Get comfortable. Try to pump in a warm, quiet, private place.
- A sweater or blanket can provide warmth and privacy.
- Massage breasts before pumping to help the milk to flow.
- Place a pillow on your lap; imagine nursing.
- Look at a picture of your baby; think about your baby (soft, warm and cuddly).

**Tips to Help You Pump:**

- Cup the breast shield in your hand and support your arm with pillows.
- To make the breast shield form a better seal on your breast, moisten the edge of the shield with water or breastmilk.
- Start pumping at minimum suction, then increase suction to as high as is comfortable. Reduce suction if there is any discomfort. Call your breastfeeding counselor if pumping continues to hurt. Do not use a pump that hurts.
- While pumping, don't watch the bottle fill; just check occasionally to be sure it is not too full.
- Talk on the phone, watch TV, listen to music or a relaxation tape, read, or just relax.

**Pumping One Breast at a Time (Single Pumping):**

Pump each breast for about five minutes. Then pump each breast for about three minutes, then each breast for about two minutes. Each breast is pumped a total of ten minutes but you will get more milk if you go back and forth than if you pump each breast for ten minutes straight. Follow this schedule even if you are not getting much milk. This will help you build your milk supply. Keep on pumping even if the milk stops flowing before 20 minutes is up.

**Pumping for a Preterm or Hospitalized Baby:**

- Follow the instructions the hospital has given you. Use the containers the hospital recommends or provides. The hospital will tell you whether to freeze or refrigerate the breastmilk and how to transport it.
- Pump at least eight times a day, including at least once at night. To make more milk, pump 10-12 times every 24 hours.
- During the day, never go more than three hours without pumping. If you are pumping enough milk, you may sleep as long as five hours between nighttime pumping sessions.
- If you will be pumping for more than a week, you might want to pump both breasts at the same time. Double-pumping sessions are ten to fifteen minutes long.