

Healthy Child Care Iowa Fact Sheet

Supporting Breast Milk Feeding | July 2024


Healthy Child Care Iowa (HCCI) works to improve the quality of health and safety in Early Care and Education (ECE) programs serving infants, toddlers, preschoolers, school-aged children and their families. The items included in fact sheets were identified recent findings on the *Health and Safety Checklist for Early Care and Education Programs*.

As a child care professional, your support of mothers who are breastfeeding is important. Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for most infants and provides many health benefits. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that mothers exclusively breastfeed their infants for the first six month of life and that mothers continue to breastfeed until the child is at least one year.



Benefits of breast milk feeding:

- It's easier for the baby to digest.
- It has all the nutrients, calories, and fluids a baby needs to be healthy.
- It has growth factors that ensure the best development of the baby's organs.
- It has substances that protect against many diseases and infections. Breastfed babies have a lower risk for:
 - Ear infections
 - Gastrointestinal infections (diarrhea/vomiting)
 - Asthma
 - Type 1 Diabetes
 - Obesity
 - Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

 Scan the QR code to find your local CCNC or visit online at <https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/programs-and-services/child-care/hcci>

Support Breast Milk Feeding and Guidelines for Your Policies and Procedures for Serving Breast Milk

What can I do?

- Welcome breast milk fed infants into your child care program by creating a comfortable environment (private space if possible) for mothers to breastfeed at drop off and pick up.
- Communicate with parents about their infant’s feeding habits and hunger cues.
- Always ask parents about preferences for unused breast milk before discarding.
- A caregiver/teacher should not bottle feed more than one infant at a time.
- It is not necessary to wear gloves when feeding or handling breast milk.
- Bottle feeding techniques should mimic approaches to breastfeeding (paced feeding):
 - Initiate feeding when infant provides cues (rooting, sucking, etc.).
 - Hold the infant during feedings and respond to vocalizations with eye contact and vocalizations.
 - Alternate sides of caregiver’s/teacher’s lap.
 - Allow breaks during the feeding for burping.
 - Allow infant to stop the feeding.

Use the QR code, or link below, for paced bottle feeding tips!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGPm5SpLxXY>



Breast Milk Storage Time and Temperature Chart*

Type of Breast Milk	Room Temperature (countertop) 77°F or colder (25°C)	Refrigerator 40°F (4°C)	Freezer 0°F or colder (-18°C)
Freshly Expressed or Pumped	Do not use after 4 hours	Do not use after 4 days (96 hours)	Within 6 months is best. Do not use after 12 months
Thawed or Previously Frozen	Do not use after 1–2 hours	Do not use after 1 day (24 hours)	Never refreeze thawed breast milk
Leftover from a Feeding (baby did not finish the bottle)	Use within 2 hours after the baby is finished feeding		

*Per CDC 01/24/2022: Proper Storage and Preparation of Breast Milk & CACFP 04/24/2024: Infant Meal Pattern

Delivery to child care

- Frozen breast milk may be transported and stored in single use plastic bags or containers and placed in the back of the freezer (not a compartment within a refrigerator but either a freezer with a separate door or a stand-alone freezer).
- Non-frozen breast milk should be transported and stored in a clean and sanitary bottle with a nipple to be used to feed the infant.

Labeling

- The bottle or container should be properly labeled with the infant's full name and the date/time the milk was expressed.
- Do not accept unlabeled bottles or containers.
- Labels with the infant's name and date/time should not come off when washing and handling. This is especially important when the frozen bottle is thawed in running tap water. There may be several bottles from different mothers being thawed and warmed at the same time in the same place.

Do Not Use Milk if:

- There is visible blood in the milk
- It is in an unsanitary bottle
- It is curdled
- Smells rotten
- It has been sitting out
- It has not been stored following the storage chart

If breast milk is mistakenly fed to another child the CDC has steps that must be taken to inform both families.

Storage

- Use breast milk storage bags or clean food-grade containers with tight fitting lids. Avoid plastics containing bisphenol A (BPA)/labeled recycle symbol #7.
- Non-frozen breast milk should be kept refrigerated.
- Refrigerator and freezer temperatures should be monitored and recorded on a daily log to ensure that breast milk is stored at the appropriate temperature.
- Follow parent preferences for unused milk.

Infant formula should not be used for a breast milk fed infant without the parent's written permission.

Preparation

- The caregiver/teacher should check for the infant's full name and the date/time on the bottle. Use the oldest milk first.
- Breast milk may be served cold from the refrigerator and does not need to be warmed. If the parent requests the breast milk be warmed, hold the bottle under warm (not hot) water or place it in a bowl of warm water immediately before serving. Bottles should not be left in warm water for more than 5 minutes.
- A microwave should never be used to defrost/warm milk. It destroys nutrient quality and could burn the infant.
- Record the date/time milk was thawed.
- Never shake breast milk as this could make the milk break down. After warming, mix bottles by gently swirling.
- The temperature of the milk should be tested before feeding.

Contact your local Child Care Nurse Consultant (CCNC) for additional guidance.