

How To Express & Heat Treat Breast Milk

What do I need to know?

- * Mothers who have HIV can greatly reduce the risk of passing the virus to their babies through breast milk if they express their breast milk and heat it before giving it to their babies.
- * This method can be used from birth or during the transition time between exclusive breastfeeding and replacement feeding.

How do I begin?

- * To use this method, you will need water, fuel, a container with a wide neck and cover, and an open cup to feed the baby.
- * Wash the container and cup that you will use to feed your baby with soap and water, or boil them in a large pot of water.

There are two methods you can use to safely heat treat breast milk.

Method 1

Direct Heating or Standard Pasteurization

- * Express your milk and put it in a small heat proof jar (or can) and cover it with a lid.
- * Heat the milk in a pot of water until the milk just reaches the boiling point (when it just begins to make bubbles).
- * Remove the jar from the heat.

- * Place the jar in a container of cool water, or let it stand alone to cool, until it reaches room temperature.
- * Protect the milk as it cools by keeping the lid on it or by covering it with a clean cloth.
- * Once you have heated the milk, use it to feed your baby within one hour.

Method 2

Indirect Heating or Pretoria Pasteurization

- * Express your milk, put it in a small heat-proof jar (or can) and cover it with a lid.
- * Fill a larger pot with water and bring the water to the boiling point. Once it starts to boil, remove it from the heat.
- * Place the jar with milk in the pot of boiling water. Leave it in the hot water for 15-to-20 minutes and then remove the jar.
- * Place the jar in container of cool water or let it stand alone to cool, until the milk reaches room temperature.
- * Protect the milk as it cools by keeping the lid on it or by covering it with a clean cloth.
- * Once you have heated the milk, use it to feed your baby within one hour.

How to hand express breast milk

- * Wash your hands with soap and water.
- * Sit or stand in a comfortable position in a quiet place. It is sometimes helpful to apply a warm cloth to your breasts and to lightly massage them to stimulate the flow of milk.
- * Put your thumb on the breast above the dark area around the nipple, known as the areola, and your first finger below the nipple and areola. Support your breast with your other fingers.
- * Gently press your thumb and first finger together. Press and release, press and release. This helps to start the milk flowing. This should not hurt. If it does, then you are not doing it right.
- * Press the same way on the sides of the areola in order to empty all parts of the breast.
- * Do not squeeze the nipple itself or rub your fingers along the skin. Your fingers should “roll” over the breast.

- * Express one breast for 3-to-5 minutes until the flow slows down and then switch to the other breast. Then do both breasts again. Change your hands when the one hand gets tired. You can use either hand for either breast.
- * Store the breast milk in a clean, covered container in a cool place until you are ready to heat and feed it to your baby.

Things to remember:

- * Unheated milk can be stored for up to 8 hours at room temperature or up to 24 hours in a refrigerator.
- * Do not give the heated milk to your baby until it reaches room temperature.
- * Once you have heated the milk, use it within one hour.
- * Either you or someone else can feed the baby using an open cup. Even a new born baby learns quickly how to drink from a cup. Avoid using bottles and nipples. They are difficult to clean and can cause your baby to become very sick.
- * Wash all of the utensils that you have used with soap and water, or boil them.
- * Women who choose to express and heat treat their breast milk for their babies lose some of the child-spacing benefits of breastfeeding.
- * Women who choose to use this method of feeding should practice safe sex and consider using family planning, starting as soon after giving birth as possible.

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