

# BREAST MILK – EXPIRATION GUIDE

## Conservation of EBM on the unit

- Breast milk that has exceeded the recommended conservation times described above must be discarded.

Product status	Time before product expiration
Fresh breast milk at room temperature	4 h
Refrigerated fresh breast milk	48 h
Thawed breast milk kept in the refrigerator	24 h
Thawed breast milk at room temperature	4 h
Fresh or thawed breast milk that has been warmed	1 h
Frozen breast milk in hospital	up to 1 year or depending on available space in freezer

## Indications

- To outline safe practices for the handling, thawing, storage, verification, and administration of expressed breast milk (EBM)

## Key points

- Breast milk is a **body fluid** that may contain potential pathogens, therefore routine infection control precautions and practices should be used when being handled.
- Care must be taken to ensure that the correct breast milk is fed to the correct infant.
- If an infant receives breast milk from someone other than their mother, follow the procedure outlined in the management of breast milk errors protocol.
- **Mothers** intending to breast feed should **receive teaching about unit's policies** related to the handling, thawing, storage, verification and administration of expressed breast milk.

## Labelling of EBM

- All expressed breast milk must be labeled using **standardized labels**.
- Mothers should be instructed to write the **date and time** the breast milk was expressed **on the label** prior to storage
- Labels are available in labels binder at the nursing stations.

## Storage of EBM

- Expressed breast milk must be stored in patient specific bins in the refrigerator or freezer (located in the milk room) identified using the standardized labels for breast milk identification.
- Fresh breast milk should be refrigerated or frozen as soon as possible after being expressed.
- **Discard leftover EBM after feeding.** Do not re-refrigerate leftover EBM that has been at room temperature.