



## Mothers' Milk Bank Northeast

*Share the Health*

### **Storing, Defrosting, and Warming Pasteurized Frozen Human Milk**

#### **Storing Milk:**

All the donor human milk supplied to you has been pasteurized and then frozen.

- Place all the donor human milk in the freezer for further storage.
- The bottles should be placed in the rear of the freezer, away from the freezer door. The freezer door is not an appropriate place for storage since the temperature changes when the door is opened.
- On each bottle is an expiration date, which is one year from the time the donor milk was first pumped.

#### **Defrosting Milk:**

- Donor human milk can be defrosted quickly in a container of warm water, not to exceed 37°C/98°F.
- The water must cover the level of the donor human milk in the bottle, but not touch the lid. Water touching the lid can seep in the bottle and contaminate the milk.
- The optimal method of defrosting donor human milk is to place the frozen bottle in the refrigerator for an overnight slow thaw. The donor human milk should be used within the next 24 hours.
- When milk is fully defrosted, the bottle should be gently swirled to ensure uniform distribution of fat and micronutrients.

#### **Warming Milk:**

- Never microwave donor human milk. Use only warm water to defrost or warm it.
- An individual serving can be warmed by standing the container of milk briefly in warm water or holding under running warm water. Care must be taken to keep the cap dry.

**Questions:** Contact Cynthia Cohen at [cynthia@milkbankne.org](mailto:cynthia@milkbankne.org), 617-340-3497

This information is provided by Mothers' Milk Bank Northeast and is taken from *Best Practices for Expressing, Storing and Handling Human Milk in Hospitals, Homes and Child Care Settings* by Frances Jones, Human Milk Banking Association of North America, 2011.