



Packing/Shipping Breastmilk

BLUF: *There are a number of reasons why military servicemembers and families may need to ship breastmilk. Military servicemembers often are separated from their breastfeeding children due to TDY, deployments, training exercises or schools, or other job requirements. Many military families also PCS while breastfeeding and may choose to ship milk.*

Key Points:

1. **Supplies:** in addition to your pump and all the normal pumping supplies you take to work, breastfeeding through long separations will require additional supplies to ship milk.
 - a. Extra storage bags (Tricare will cover this, but you'll need an additional prescription) b. Permanent marker to label and date your milk storage bags
 - b. Coolers—Styrofoam or soft-sided coolers may be used to ship milk, and small electric coolers may be used for short-term transport or storage.
 - c. Shipping supplies—boxes, labels, and packing tape. Also consider if you'll use freezer bags or brown packing paper to double-wrap your milk bags, and any packing material to take up extra space.
 - d. Gloves if you'll be using dry ice to ship.
2. **Packing:** typically, well-packed frozen milk will stay frozen for overnight or 2-day shipping, depending on the ambient temperature.
 - a. Pack 4-6 frozen bags of milk into a brown bag and/or wrap with packing paper.
 - b. Pack 2 of these wrapped packages into a Ziploc gallon freezer bag.
 - c. Line the cooler with brown packing paper or newspaper and layer double-wrapped milk bags, alternating newspaper/packing paper between each layer of milk bags. OR
 - d. If using dry ice, pack bags of milk around the block of dry ice inside the cooler.
 - e. Fill any space with packing material (brown paper, newspaper, bubble wrap, etc) f. Pack coolers into the shipping box, and fill any space with packing material. Securely tape box and reinforce the tape, then label for shipping.
3. **Shipping:** limited shipping costs are only covered for service members that are in a TDY status IAW with the [revision to the Joint Travel Regulation \(JTR\)](#). The Coast Guard Mutual Association offers [grants to cover the costs of shipping breastmilk](#). The Parents need to contact carriers ahead of time to verify all costs. Typically, shipping charges include weight, expedited fee for overnight or 2nd-day delivery, and there may also be additional charges or special instructions if using dry ice and/or shipping overseas. Generally, Fed-Ex, UPS, or DHL are preferred carriers. Milk Stork is another courier that offers several options.
4. **Traveling:** if you will be traveling with milk via air, see our info sheet on Air Travel While Breastfeeding. If

you will be transporting your milk in a vehicle, several things to keep in mind:

- a. For short distances or small amounts of milk, a small cooler that charges in the vehicle is usually sufficient.
- b. For long distances or large volumes of milk, a larger cooler, portable deep freezer, or dry ice will ensure your milk stays frozen, especially if you'll be traveling during hot temperatures. 5. Dry ice safety: When using dry ice to keep breastmilk cold, remember a few safety points. a. As dry ice melts, it will expand. Never completely seal a container to make it airtight, there is the potential for it to explode. As long as there is a way for air to get out, it will be safe.
- c. If traveling with dry ice in a vehicle, ensure the vehicle is well-ventilated to avoid CO2 buildup. c. Use gloves when handling dry ice. It can cause frostbite.

Resources:

- a. [FEDEX video on shipping breastmilk](#)
- b. [UPS Info on shipping temperature sensitive material](#)
- c. [UPS Dry Ice guidelines](#)
- d. [DHL Dangerous Goods Shipping guidelines](#)
- e. [Personal experience: shipping breastmilk from Germany to US](#)
- f. [CGMA Reimbursement for Shipping Breast Milk](#)
- g. [Military Breastfeeding Policies](#)

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