



Pumping and Storing Milk During Field Training and Mobility Exercises

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BLUF:

The term field encompasses a wide range of environments where electricity, running water, and refrigeration may or may not be available during part or all of the field assignment. Lactating servicemembers MUST continue to express milk to protect their own health. Low-resource environments require flexible and adaptable practices to protect expressed milk and minimize health risks. The CDC and OSHA agree “human milk is not among the bodily fluids that require special handling or storage in a separate container” (CDC, 2015).

Key Points:

Maintain Milk Supply and Protect Your Health:

- Regular breaks to express milk are required, recommended every 4-6 hours.
- Ensure adequate hydration and caloric intake.

Milk Expression:

- If using an electric pump, consider electrical adapter, batteries or converters that might be needed. If traveling overseas, contact pump manufacturer for alternate voltage power supply cords and plugs.
- Consider bringing several sets of pump supplies (flange, tubing, valves, membranes) individually packed in a gallon plastic bag.
AND consider bringing a manual pump.
AND BFINCB recommends that ALL servicemembers learn hand-expression as a vital skill for military field readiness. If milk collection is not possible, lactating servicemembers should hand-express and discard milk to prevent milk stasis and related injuries or illnesses (clogged ducts, mastitis). <https://globalhealthmedia.org/portfolio-items/how-to-express-breastmilk/>
- Before expressing milk, wash hands
OR Clean hands with hand sanitizer, if necessary wipe breasts with clean damp cloth (do NOT use sanitizer on breasts)
- After each session, rinse pump supplies with clean water
OR Use sanitizing wipes to wipe down pump and pump parts (Some manufacturers make cleaning wipes for breast pump parts)

- LABEL YOUR MILK with: Name, Unit, Contact Info, Date/time milk was expressed, and “Breast Milk” or “Human Milk”
- Store milk in refrigerator or cooler with ice packs. Note that risks of potential bacterial contamination are significantly less for a healthy full-term infant over the age of 3 months than for a newborn, premature, or medically compromised infant.

Pump Cleaning And Maintenance:

- Store pump parts in refrigerator or cooler in between pumping sessions, if available.
- Alternate using sets of pump parts with each pumping session.
- Disassemble and sanitize pump and pump parts each night using hot water and designated bottle brush and let air-dry
OR use microwave sterilizer bags and let air-dry
OR use two gallon plastic bags and clean water. Place pump parts and soap and water in one bag to clean, then place pump parts and clean water in second bag to rinse

Resources:

Guidelines for Storing Expressed Milk:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidelines for Storing Milk:
https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm

TYPE OF BREAST MILK	STORAGE LOCATIONS AND TEMPERATURES		
	Countertop 77°F (25°C) or colder (room temperature)	Refrigerator 40°F (4°C)	Freezer 0°F (-18°C) or colder
Freshly Expressed or Pumped	Up to 4 Hours	Up to 4 Days	Within 6 months is best Up to 12 months is acceptable
Thawed, Previously Frozen	1-2 Hours	Up to 1 Day (24 hours)	NEVER refreeze human milk after it has been thawed
Leftover from a Feeding (baby did not finish the bottle)	Use within 2 hours after the baby is finished feeding		

These guidelines are for healthy full-term babies and may vary for premature or sick babies. Check with your health care provider.

Find more breastfeeding resources at: WICBreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov
www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/

[AD 2015-43, AR 600-20 \(Army\)](#)

Army directive and regulation describing commander and soldier responsibilities for accommodating breastfeeding in field environments.

[TB MED 530 Waiver \(Army\)](#)

Army regulation stating that human milk may be stored in DFAC/food storage refrigeration facilities

[AFGM2019-36-02 3.1.4 \(Air Force\)](#)

Air Force Guidance Memorandum describing lactation support for Air Force Personnel.

Additional Information: (this list is not all-inclusive!)

[Pumping Strategies](#)

[Shipping Breastmilk](#)

[Air Travel While Breastfeeding \(Pumping\)](#)

[Military Policies](#) pertaining to Parental Leave and Human Lactation

[Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies](#) best practices for low-resource/austere environments

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