



# Pumping, Storing, and Transport Guide During Rapid Mobilization/Deployment

LTC Kelly M. Bell, MSN, RN, CEN, USAR; Maria Batlle, CLEC; Catherine Kimball-Eayrs, MD,  
IBCLC

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## **BLUF:**

*Military service members may be required to mobilize and/or deploy at any given time. Those in rapid response units may have as little as 24 hours to prepare to deploy. In situations where a lactating parent is expected to deploy at a moment's notice, service members should inform themselves of all available options, to include the option to wean for longer deployments. Lactating service members **MUST** continue to express milk to protect their own health and wean, if necessary, in a safe manner. Low-resource environments require flexible and adaptable practices to minimize health risks and protect expressed milk. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) agree "human milk is not among the bodily fluids that require special handling or storage in a separate container" (CDC, 2015).*

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## **Initial Considerations:**

- **Communicate.** Once you find out you will be mobilizing/deploying, if possible, let your command know that you are still breastfeeding/pumping and you will need breaks to continue to do this.
- **Be prepared!** Try to research your location before arriving and check to see if there are refrigerators/outlets/electricity. If no information is available, assume there is none and plan accordingly. If you can, bring dry ice packs, small cooler bags, gloves, baby wipes, hand sanitizer, a manual breast pump, milk storage bags, dish soap, bottled water, and gallon storage bags. You can use baby wipes to wipe any fluids you might have exposed yourself to.  
*\*Electrical sources may not be readily available on aircraft or in remote duty locations. It is recommended to learn how to hand express and bring a manual pump as a backup. Some electric pumps come with vehicle adapters or portable batteries, but TRICARE specifically excludes pump batteries from coverage.*
- **Prepare at home.** Nurse/pump as you would normally, about 6-8 times during this time. Any extra can be stored in a seal-tight freezer bag with date and left with the baby. **Learn to [hand express your milk](#) before leaving.**
- **Plan for the worse.** If all else fails and you can't bring anything due to your environment, plan to hand express as often as needed to relieve your discomfort. If you can't save your milk, pumping and discarding your milk will be the safest option. Eventually your supply will regulate down. The most important thing is to try to deter any infections and prevent milk stasis and related injuries or illnesses (clogged ducts, mastitis). *Hand expression link above!*

**Key Points:**

**Maintain Milk Supply and Protect Your Health:**

- Regular breaks to express milk is recommended every 4-6 hours. Note that your supply will regulate depending on the frequency of milk expression.
- Ensure adequate hydration and caloric intake. Dehydration will certainly impact your milk supply, as well as stress.

**Milk Expression:**

- If using an electric pump, consider an electrical adapter, batteries, or converters that might be needed. If traveling overseas, contact pump manufacturers for alternate voltage power supply cords and plugs.
- Consider bringing several sets of pump supplies (flanges, tubing, valves, membranes) individually packed in a gallon plastic bag  
**AND** consider bringing a manual pump.
- 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”.
- Bring a cover if you feel more comfortable doing so. During this time, be prepared for a likely drop in your milk supply and know the option to pump and dump is okay, in order to maintain supply. If you have the opportunity to research ways to ship your milk, you can continue to pump and save, provided there are adequate milk storage options. Talk to cooks/dining facilities at your location to see if there is a way for you to store your milk (use [Army Waiver to TB MED 530](#) for storage in a military dining facility).

**Pump Cleaning and Maintenance:**

- Store pump parts in a 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/bottled water. Place pump parts and soap and water in one bag to clean, then place pump parts and clean water in the second bag to rinse. Label bags if needed.

### Storage and Transport:

- **Storage.** If available, store milk in the 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. If there is a military dining facility, you may also store it there (use [Army Waiver to TB MED 530](#)). If storage is not available, local milk donation may be an option. As a last resort, you may have to dump your expressed milk.
- **Transport.** Transport your milk home with you in a cooler. It can be checked with your luggage on shorter flights or you can carry it on. It is exempt from the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA's) 3-1-1 rule, even if your infant is not with you. According to the [CDC](#), X-ray screening is safe and compatible for lactating parents, expressed milk, infants, and young children. [TSA](#) allows breastmilk, formula, juice, and baby foods in excess of the 3-1-1 liquid rule, but you need to declare it at security. If you prefer not to have your milk X-rayed, let the TSA agents know and they can do alternative screening processes on you and your milk. [Air Mobility Command](#) (for Space-A travel) follows TSA guidance. [TSA](#) allows breast pumps in both checked and carry-on luggage. You may need to declare your breast pump at the security checkpoint. This applies to both manual and electric pumps. Please note, the pump does NOT entitle you to an extra piece of luggage, so make sure it fits into your carryon.

### Wearing Heavy Gear:

- If you will be wearing heavy gear, ensure it is not putting a lot of pressure on your breast tissue as this could potentially lead to plugged ducts and/or mastitis. Adjust accordingly, but ensure you are still protected.

### Rapid/Sudden Weaning:

- While rapid weaning is not the best option, it may become necessary during a rapid mobilization/deployment.
  - If you experience engorgement during weaning, you may need to slow down the process. This will give your breasts time to adjust to the reduced demand for milk. If expressing milk more often is not an option, try expressing just enough milk to relieve the fullness by hand or pump.
  - **Over-the-counter medications/herbs:** Pseudoephedrine, Peppermint (such as Altoids), and Sage. **As with any medications, it is important to consult with your healthcare provider before taking medications to try to reduce your milk supply.**
  - **Pain relief:** between milk expression sessions, apply ice for 15–20 minutes at a time to reduce swelling. Use an ice pack, crushed ice in plastic bags, or bags of frozen vegetables (that can be refrozen several times before being thrown away). Wrap them in a lightweight towel to protect your skin. You can also take Tylenol and/or ibuprofen to help relieve pain.  
<https://www.laleche.org.uk/engorged-breasts-avoiding-and-treating/>
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## **Resources:**


### **Guidelines for Storing Expressed Milk:**

CDC Milk Storage Guidelines: [https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling\\_breastmilk.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm)

| Human Milk Storage Guidelines                               |   |                            |  |
|---|---|----------------------------|--|
| STORAGE LOCATIONS AND TEMPERATURES                          |   |                            |  |
| TYPE OF BREAST MILK   | Countertop<br>77°F (25°C) or colder<br>(room temperature) | Refrigerator<br>40°F (4°C) | Freezer<br>0°F (-18°C) or colder                         |
| Freshly Expressed or Pumped                                 | Up to 4 Hours   | Up to 4 Days               | Within 6 months is best<br>Up to 12 months is acceptable |
| Thawed, Previously Frozen                                   | 1-2 Hours   | Up to 1 Day<br>(24 hours)  | NEVER refreeze human milk<br>after it has been thawed    |
| Leftover from a Feeding<br>(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](http://WICBreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov)  
[www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/](http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/)



### **AR 600-20 (Army)**

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

### **AFGM2020-36-01(Air Force)**

Air Force Guidance Memorandum describing lactation support for Air Force personnel

### **Army Waiver to TB MED 530**

Waiver authorizing the storage of human breastmilk in dining facility refrigeration

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*Proper Storage and Preparation of Breast Milk.* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 22 Jan. 2020. [www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling\\_breastmilk.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm). Accessed 13 Feb. 2020.

Roche-Paull, R. *Breastfeeding in Combat Boots: A Survival Guide to Successful Breastfeeding While Serving in the Military.* Createspace Independent Publishing Platform, 2010.

Roche-Paull, Robyn. "Breast Pump Cleaning Guidelines." July 2017, Accessed 11 Aug. 2017.

Please contact us at [wecare@globalmilcom.org](mailto:wecare@globalmilcom.org)

Website: <https://www.globalmilcom.org>

Military Lactation Counselor (MiLC) Program - 53 hours of lactation education virtual training:

<https://mom2momglobal.thinkific.com/courses/military-lactation-counselor-training>