

Background

Breastfeeding or feeding your baby with expressed breast milk (EBM) is beneficial to both you and your baby in the short and long term and, except in rare circumstances, is encouraged and supported in SA Health services.

The process of expressing breast milk and the administration of EBM is not a sterile procedure. There is, through breast milk, a small risk of transmission of infection to:

- your baby, and
- healthcare workers

This risk can be minimised by following appropriate procedures for infection prevention and control.

To prevent and control infections, clinical protocols have been developed in SA Health facilities to support you, your baby and health care workers when managing EBM.

How can I reduce the risk of transmitting infection to my baby when using my EBM?

- 'Room in' with your baby if at all possible.
- Minimise the time you are separated from your baby
- Only feed your baby your breast milk.
- Ensure your baby has a patient identification band on both legs when in hospital (report any lost ID bands to a health care worker immediately).
- Ensure your EBM is correctly labelled and stored.
- Ensure your baby's ID and the EBM to be administered are cross checked and correct before administering the EBM.

Are there any reasons I cannot give my baby my EBM?

Sometimes your EBM may be contraindicated for your baby, such as in some clinical conditions or if you are taking certain medications.

If this is relevant for you, the health practitioners caring for you will discuss this with you and your family.

How can I reduce the risk of transmitting infection through EBM?

- Ensure you wash your hands thoroughly every time before and after handling the EBM equipment or feeding your baby.
- Use disposable EBM equipment as per the manufacturer's instructions.
- Label EBM immediately after expressing (name, date, time).
- Store EBM in the refrigerator or freezer, in the same container you collect it in.
- DO NOT store your EBM in the door of the refrigerator due to temperature fluctuations.
- Use EBM within 72 hours of collection or 24 hours after thawing.
- Use EBM within 1 hour of removal from the refrigerator.
- Use warm water or a commercial bottle warmer to heat your EBM.
- DO NOT heat EBM in microwave as it may heat EBM un-evenly.
- Never combine fresh EBM with refrigerated or frozen EBM.
- Ensure EBM remains frozen during transportation to a public health facility for administration to your baby.
- EBM should not be refrozen or reheated but instead excess EBM should be discarded.

Expressed
Breast Milk
Safe
Management &
Administration
2018.

How do I discard my unused EBM?

It is recommended that small amounts of unused EBM, (i.e. less than 10mls) can be discarded via the sewage system, but large volumes (i.e. greater than 10mls) should be discarded as clinical waste when in a health facility.

When at home, large volumes of unused EBM (i.e. greater than 10mls), should be discarded via the sewage system.

It is important that unused EBM is not discarded in any wash basin that has been identified for hand washing.

Storing EBM?

Your EBM should be stored in a designated area in the refrigerator/freezer located at the rear of the unit. EBM should not be stored on the door of the refrigerator/freezer unit as there are more fluctuations in temperature in this area.

Additional information regarding the safe storage of EBM can be found in The SA Health Clinical Directive *Expressed Breast Milk Safe Management and Administration in SA 2018*
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/perinatal

Should I give my baby donated EBM?

Given the infection control risks, SA Health does not support wet nursing (when a woman feeds a baby who is not her biological child) and will only administer donor EBM when the donor milk has been obtained from a regulated milk bank.

Where can I secure more information?

Additional information can be found in:

- The SA Health Clinical Directive *Expressed Breast Milk Safe Management and Administration in SA 2018*
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/perinatal
- The Australian Breastfeeding Association
<https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/bf-info/breastfeeding-and-work/expressing-and-storing-breastmilk>

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Copies of the publication are available from
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/perinatal

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