

Freshly expressed breast milk can be thickened with Gelmix up to 24 hours before feeding. Prepare it while the milk is still close to body temperature whenever possible, because warmth helps activate Gelmix.

Before You Start

- Wash your hands and clean the preparation surface.
- Use clean bottles, containers, and feeding equipment.
- Use only freshly expressed breast milk that has not been refrigerated for advance preparation.
- Follow the Gelmix recipe for the thickness your child needs.
- Follow your child's healthcare provider's feeding instructions.
- If current CDC guidance or your child's healthcare provider recommends a shorter storage time, follow the shorter storage time.

Prepare and Refrigerate

- Measure the freshly expressed breast milk.
- If needed, gently warm it to about 100°F/38°C.
- Add Gelmix according to the recipe for the prescribed thickness.
- Cap and mix well for about 30 seconds, until fully dissolved.
- Refrigerate immediately after mixing in a clean, sealed container at 40°F/4°C or colder. The full Gelmix wait time still applies before serving and may occur while refrigerated; the milk will continue to thicken as it cools.
- Label the container with the date and time the milk was expressed and Gelmix was added.
- Use within 24 hours of adding Gelmix.

Before Feeding

- Mix again before pouring or feeding.
- Serve cold or gently warmed. Cold Gelmix-thickened breast milk will usually be thicker.
- If warming is preferred, warm only the amount needed for one feeding. Gently warming it toward 100°F/38°C will usually bring it closer to the intended thickness.
- If thickening for dysphagia, use the IDDSI Flow Test to verify the prescribed thickness at the temperature at which the feeding will be served, because temperature can affect thickness.
- Once breast milk has been warmed or brought to room temperature, use it within 2 hours. Once feeding begins, discard any remaining milk after 1 hour.
- Never microwave breast milk.

Freeze and Thaw

- Prepare Gelmix only with freshly expressed breast milk that has not been refrigerated.
- Transfer it to a clean breast-milk storage container, leaving space for expansion.
- Label with the date the milk was expressed, thickened, and frozen.
- Freeze immediately and use within 3 months.
- Thaw the oldest milk first, overnight in the refrigerator or in a sealed container placed in lukewarm water.

Freeze and Thaw, continued

- Never microwave or refreeze completely thawed breast milk.
- After it has completely thawed in the refrigerator, use it within 24 hours. Once warmed or brought to room temperature, use it within 2 hours.
- Mix well. If thickening for dysphagia, repeat the IDDSI Flow Test at the serving temperature.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does the milk need to thicken before refrigeration?

No. Refrigerate it immediately after mixing. The full Gelmix wait time still applies before serving, and the milk will continue to thicken as it cools.

Does a prepared feeding need to be warmed?

No. It may be served cold or gently warmed. Keep in mind that it will usually be thicker when served cold.

Why is refrigerated milk thicker?

Gelmix continues to thicken as the milk cools. Gently warming it toward 100°F/38°C will usually bring it closer to the intended thickness. If thickening for dysphagia, use the IDDSI Flow Test to verify the prescribed thickness at the temperature at which the feeding will be served.

Can I use previously refrigerated breast milk?

Not for advance preparation. This method is intended for freshly expressed breast milk that has not been refrigerated. This avoids warming previously refrigerated milk to activate Gelmix and then cooling and refrigerating it again.

What should I do with milk left after a feeding?

Discard any breast milk remaining in the bottle 1 hour after feeding begins. Do not refrigerate or reuse it.

Quick Safety Reminders

- Refrigerate prepared breast milk immediately.
- Label with the expression and Gelmix preparation date and time.
- Use within 24 hours of adding Gelmix.
- Never microwave breast milk.
- Do not cool and warm the same breast milk repeatedly.
- If thickening for dysphagia, verify the prescribed thickness with the IDDSI Flow Test at the serving temperature.

Food Safety Note: This handout provides Gelmix-specific preparation guidance and does not replace current CDC breast milk storage and handling recommendations or your child's healthcare provider's instructions. If current CDC guidance or your child's healthcare provider recommends a shorter storage time, follow the shorter storage time.

For complete guidance, visit: gelmix.com/advanceprep