

Do not delay evacuating because of your frozen milk. Call ahead to your destination or any overnight stops along the way to see if they have freezer space for your milk.

Packing your frozen milk for evacuation:

- Use a well-insulated cooler that will hold your milk.
- Line the bottom of your cooler with newspaper.
- Place your milk bags in the cooler.
- Fill any extra space with more crumpled newspaper. Packing your cooler as tightly as possible insures that it stays cold for as long as possible.
- Place another layer of newspaper on top of the milk.
- Place frozen gel packs or ice blocks on top of the newspaper.
- Consider sealing your cooler with duct tape to improve the seal and prevent it from opening up and spilling out the milk, if knocked over.
- Keep the cooler closed until you have reached your destination freezer.

Dry ice may be used in place of gel packs or regular ice. Dry ice is often hard to find in an emergency situation, however, and does require additional safety precautions when handling. Dry ice also should never come in direct contact with the bags of milk, as it will rip the bags and spill the milk.

#### **Additional resources**

- Infant Feeding in Emergencies, LLLI
- “Evacuating with Frozen Milk,” Human Milk News
- Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies, USBC
- “My power went out and I have breastmilk in the freezer. Help!” KellyMom
- Hand Expression, Stanford Medical School
- Hurricane Preparedness, American Academy of Pediatrics
- Disaster Planning: Infant and Child Feeding, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## Breastfeeding During A Hurricane

<https://llusa.org/breastfeeding-during-a-hurricane/>



Are you in the path of a hurricane or tropical storm? Are you wondering how you can keep your breastmilk safe during a potential power outage or if there are benefits to nursing through a storm? Read on for information on breastfeeding during a hurricane.

## Keeping Baby Close

Please keep in mind:

- Breastfeeding is a safe and effective way to feed a child in an emergency. Human milk is always clean, requires no fuel, water, or electricity, and is readily available when baby and nursing parent are kept close.
- Human milk contains antibodies that fight infection, including diarrhea and respiratory infections that are common among infants in emergency situations such as hurricanes and tropical storms.
- Breastfeeding releases hormones that lower stress and anxiety in both the child and the nursing parent. Especially when stressed, it is important to continue offering the breast or expressing milk at regular intervals.
- If a baby (or parent) becomes ill, continuing breastfeeding provides baby with human antibodies that fight the illness.

If you are in the process of weaning, it is best to continue nursing until the emergency passes.

## Expressing Milk During A Hurricane

- Expressing milk should continue at the same rate or more frequently during an emergency. Dropping pumping sessions, for example, will lead to a lowering of supply.
- Keep your pump close. If you have a hand pump, plan to evacuate with both your electrical pump and hand pump. **Remember also that hand expression is an effective tool for removing milk** that does not require equipment or sanitation besides a clean container and washed hands.
- Take advantage of any situation where you can safely wash your pump parts. If you do not have safe, clean water, consider hand expression instead.

## Feeding Expressed Milk During A Hurricane

- It can be difficult to sanitize bottles and bottle teats in an emergency. Cups, including disposable cups, can be used instead, even for newborns. Find more about cup feeding here: [youtube.com/watch?v=OkhSJ16FHfY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkhSJ16FHfY)
- According to the CDC, throw out bottle nipples or pacifiers that have been in contact with floodwater.

## Leaving Frozen Milk Behind

Do not delay evacuating because of your frozen milk. Ideally, your goal is to prevent your milk from thawing completely. The best things you can do to prepare for potential power outages include:

- Before a storm or other known potential hazard event, note the position of the fridge/freezer temperature control. Turn the control to the coldest setting.
- Make sure that your freezer is as full as possible with your milk in the center. A full freezer stays frozen for much longer (48 hours) than a partially full freezer (24 hours).
- Fill empty space in the freezer with crumpled newspaper. This may help to reduce air flow.
- Keep the freezer door completely closed once the freezer has been prepped.

*Note:* Advice has circulated claiming to protect frozen breast milk from thawing by placing quart bags filled with smaller bags of milk into larger bags filled with cold water and then freezing them solid. This is not recommended. Field tests have shown that the milk bags inside thaw completely in the cold water before re-freezing.

When you return to your milk, check to see if there are any ice crystals that remain in the bags. If there are any ice crystals at all, it may be refrozen. If there are no longer ice crystals in the milk, current guidelines recommend that this milk be used within 24-48 hours (24 hours if baby is a preemie or has immune issues that require stricter precautions) and not refrozen.

## Evacuating with Frozen Milk