

Storage checklist for powdered milk replacer

- 1.) Learn what a lot number is and how to decode the manufacture date (see EwildAgain.org). This is the date that serves as the starting point for your storage timeline.
- 2.) Become an informed consumer as to the age of the package/lot you are considering purchasing. Engage with the merchant and stipulate the purchase must include only lot numbers that are quoted by the merchant and that you deem acceptable in terms of recent manufacture.
- 3.) Buy the freshest product available. Seriously consider avoiding any lot that is already over 3 months old.
- 4.) For Fox Valley products, consider placing an order directly from them.
- 5.) If possible, schedule (all or most) purchases during the colder months of the year to avoid exposure to warmer temperatures during vendor storage, transit, and delivery. Some may even offer discounts that time of year.
- 6.) Upon arrival, immediately freeze all unopened packages if possible, and at a minimum, refrigerate.
- 7.) Upon first use, open the package, remove and thaw only enough powder to feed over the next 2-3 weeks. Return the package to the freezer in as airtight a manner as possible. Another strategy - once a new package has been opened, is to divide the powder between multiple airtight bags/containers to minimize exposing the entire larger package to air and light each time a withdrawal of powder is made. [Also, upon first opening, remember to quality check for any off-odors or unexpected characteristics – texture, color, etc.]
- 8.) If a rehabilitator offers you some unused powder (unopened or opened packages), check the lot number, calculate its age, and inquire about the storage history. If unknown or not provided, check for any signs of spoilage such as off-odor, off-color, clumps, unusual texture, etc. Determine suitability for use.
- 9.) After mixing into a liquid formula, label each container as to contents, date and time mixed. Always store in the refrigerator for ample reconstitution time (8 hours minimum) and use within the next 2-3 days. Reconsider the product label guidance of discarding prepared formula after only 24 hours.
- 10.) Once mixed and reconstituted (after 8 hours in the refrigerator) and it is determined that the volume of formula just made exceeds the amount needed to be fed in the next 72 hours, immediately freeze as described above. Avoid waiting until 72 hours and then freezing any unused portion.
- 11.) Lastly, consider determining your own expiration or ‘discard’ date when receiving each new package and mark each container accordingly. Based on this discussion, your selected date may likely be earlier and well in advance of what is stamped on the container. Try to adhere to your own date, even if it means having to discard some of the remaining unused powder.