



Powdered Milk Storage

From The Ensign, March 1997

- What kind of milk is best to store? Non-fat milk, either regular or instant, stores well when packaged properly and kept at room temperature or cooler. In the past many felt that non-instant milk would store better. There is actually no difference in shelf life between instant and non-instant powdered milk.
- What are the best containers? Milk stored in airtight, low-oxygen cans (or foil pouches) has been found to last longer and stay fresher tasting than milk stored in boxes or plastic bags.
- How long can powdered milk be stored? Optimal storage life on non-fat dry milk stored in cans at room temperature is two years before noticeable stale flavors begin to develop. However, when stored at cooler temperatures, it can be kept much longer. Rotation of powdered milk can be accomplished through personal use or by giving it to others who will use it promptly.
- How much powdered milk should be stored? Guidelines for quantities of dry milk to store are found in the booklet published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints called *Essentials of Home Production and Storage*.^{*} The booklet recommends that members store an equivalent of 300 quarts of dry milk, or approximately 75 pounds of dry milk per person per year. However, since that time, as a result of a U.S. government study on maintaining nutritional adequacy during periods of food shortage, a second option has been recommended that suggests 64 quarts, or 16 pounds, per family member per year. Equivalent to approximately one glass of milk a day, that amount will maintain minimum health standards. Keep in mind, however, that the needs of children and pregnant or nursing mothers will require more than the minimum amount of stored milk. It is recommended that families who opt to store only the minimum 16 pounds of milk per person should also increase storage of grains from the recommended 300 pounds per person to 400 pounds per person to compensate nutritionally for this change.
- How can it be determined if milk is past its prime shelf life? Powdered milk develops off-flavors and sometimes a slight discoloration (yellowing) as it ages. It also tends to harden if the container seal isn't airtight. However, it still retains some nutritional value, and unless spoilage has occurred from moisture, insects, rodents, or contamination, it is still safe to use.
- What can be done with milk that is too old to drink? It is important to think of milk in terms of optimal shelf life rather than waiting until it is too old to use. Older non-fat dry milk can be used in cooking as long as it has been protected from spoilage. If powdered milk has spoiled, however, it can be used as fertilizer in the garden.

^{*}Essentials of Home Production and Storage (catalog #32288000) can be ordered online at www.ldscatalog.com or send an e-mail to ldscatalog@ldschurch.org or call 1-800-537-5971.