

Vaccine Storage and Handling



Vaccine storage and handling errors can result in the loss of vaccines and the loss of dollars. Mishandled vaccine also affects your patients. Failure to adhere to required protocols for storage and handling can reduce vaccine potency, resulting in inadequate immune responses in patients, as well as inadequate protection against disease. Vaccine quality is the shared responsibility of all parties, from manufacturing to administration.

Please keep the safety and health of your patients and the entire community in mind and adhere to safe storage and handling of all vaccines.

For more information:

[Vaccine Storage and Handling Tool Kit](#), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov

VFC providers should consult the ISDH Immunization Policy for detailed instructions on vaccine storage and handling requirements.

8 Principles of Vaccine Storage and Handling

- 1. Do not freeze refrigerated vaccine.**
 - Freezing destroys most refrigerated vaccines.
 - Visual inspection is NOT a reliable indicator of freeze damage.
- 2. Store vaccines in equipment that maintains appropriate storage temperatures.**
 - Dormitory style refrigerators, or combination units with only one exterior door, have been proven ineffective and must not be used.
 - Stand-alone refrigerators and freezers are recommended.
- 3. Store vaccine in a temperature stable location of the storage unit.**
 - Vaccines should be stored in the middle of refrigerator or freezer away from coils, walls, floors and cold air vents.
 - Do not store in the door or adjacent to cooling vents.
- 4. Monitor vaccine storage unit temperatures.**
 - Use digital data logger to continuously monitor temps.
 - Measure liquid vial temps rather than ambient air temps with glycol or buffered detachable probe.
- 5. Immediately unpack vaccine deliveries, examine and store at appropriate temperature.**
 - Arrange deliveries of vaccine when staff is available to unpack, examine for physical damage, check temperature monitors included in shipping materials, check expiration dates, and store appropriately.
- 6. Remove expired vaccine from a storage unit to prevent accidental administration.**
 - Rotate vaccine stock weekly to ensure vaccine and diluent with shortest expiration date are used to first avoid waste from expiration.
- 7. Provide maximum time at worst temperature when calling manufacturer about a temperature excursion.**
 - Manufacturers' stability data is based on vaccine exposure at length of time at certain temperatures.
 - Always calculate at the worst case scenario unless you have exact time/temperature information.
- 8. Use equipment that maintains correct temperature for transport and off-site clinics.**
 - Keep an adequate supply of packing materials (i.e. coolers/insulated shipping containers, bubble wrap/packing materials and frozen gel packs) to accommodate the clinic supply.
 - Conduct routine temperature readings and record on a temperature log throughout the clinic day.