



Proper Maintenance and Storage of Vaccine by School Nurses

Special Instructions:

NOTE: The refrigerator must be designated for vaccines, medications and biologicals only. No food or beverage is allowed to be stored in them.

1. One school nurse and a backup person shall be assigned the responsibility for the proper storage and handling of vaccines kept in school offices.
2. Each location that stores vaccine shall have a working refrigerator and a certified calibrated digital data logger suitable for checking internal temperatures of the refrigerator. The refrigerator compartment must maintain temperatures between 36°F and 46°F (2°C and 8°C) for vaccine viability. The refrigerator temperature should be set at 40°F (4°C). The freezer compartment must maintain temperatures between -58°F and +5°F (-50°C and -15°C) for vaccine viability.
3. Refrigerator temperature should be maintained between 36° and 46° F. Freezer temperature should be maintained between -58°F and +5°F. The temperature of the refrigerator must be checked and documented each workday at the beginning of the day. The temperatures shall be recorded on the log sheets that are obtained from the Maine Immunization Program and placed on or near the refrigerator as well as documented in ImmPact. Each log shall be maintained by the school for three years and then destroyed.
4. Upon arrival of the vaccine, the designated school nurse or backup person shall immediately unpack the vaccines and place them in the refrigerator or freezer as appropriate. The lot number and quantity received should be verified and match what is listed in ImmPact and on the packing list. The vaccines shall be stored inside the refrigerator and never placed on the door shelves (there is too much temperature variation when the door is open). The vaccines shall be placed so that the cool air can circulate around the vaccines. The newest vaccine shall be placed behind any of the same type of vaccine that has an earlier expiration date.

5. The vaccines shall be written into the vaccine record book and added to the supply on hand so that the count in the record book matches the count in the refrigerator. Log into ImmPact and accept vaccine transfer. Records shall be retained in the office for three years and then destroyed.
6. The school nurse shall rotate the vaccines monthly so that the ones with the earliest expiration dates are placed in the front of the refrigerator and used first.
7. Ice packs shall be placed inside the freezer to help maintain the temperature when the door is opened.
8. Bottles of cold water shall be placed to line the inside walls of the refrigerator and on the door shelves in order to maintain the internal temperature of the refrigerator when the door is opened.
9. The School Nurse shall place a “Do Not Disconnect” sign on each refrigerator and circuit breaker. The electrical connection shall be protected from accidental disconnect by either a protected location or protective plug cover.
10. If the temperature of the refrigerator or freezer is measuring above or below the allowable temperatures listed above, the school nurse discovering a refrigerator or freezer out of temperature range shall:
 - Label the vaccine that it has been stored out of range and not to use the vaccine until given the permission to use from the manufacturer.
 - Notify the [Manufacturer](#) of the product for instructions in handling the vaccines. Contact the Maine Immunization Program, if obtained from the Maine Immunization Program.
11. In the event of an extended power outage the school nurse shall follow the procedure for extended power outages.
12. For further instructions for storing frozen vaccine, please reference the link below, pages 33-35:
<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/immunization/documents/MIP-Policies-and-Procedures.pdf>

School-based Vaccine Clinic Checklist for Safe Vaccine Handling and Storage

***Here are the 17 most important things you should do to safeguard your vaccine supply.
Are you doing them all?***

- 1. We have a school nurse or a designated person in charge of the handling and storage of our vaccines.
- 2. We have a back-up person in charge of the storage and handling of our vaccines.
- 3. A vaccine inventory log is maintained that documents:
 - Vaccine name and number of doses received
 - Date the vaccine was received
 - Arrival condition of vaccine
 - Vaccine manufacturer and lot number
 - Vaccine expiration date
- 4. Our refrigerator for vaccines is either household-style or commercial-style, NOT dormitory-style. The freezer compartment has a separate exterior door. Alternatively, we use two storage units: a free-standing refrigerator and a separate, free-standing freezer.
- 5. We do NOT store any food or drink in the refrigerator.
- 6. We unpack vaccine immediately upon arrival and place it in the refrigerator.
- 7. We store vaccines in the middle of the refrigerator, and NOT in the door.
- 8. We check vaccine expiration dates before use.
- 9. We post a sign on the refrigerator door showing which vaccines should be stored in the refrigerator and which should be stored in the freezer.
- 10. We always keep a certified calibrated thermometer in the refrigerator that can record temperatures at 36-46°F and -58°F and +5°F in the freezer.
- 11. The temperature in the refrigerator is maintained at 36–46°F. The temperature in the freezer is maintained at -58°F and +5°F.
- 12. We use bottles of cold water to line the inside walls of the refrigerator to help maintain cold temperatures.
- 13. We post a temperature log on the refrigerator door on which we record the refrigerator minimum and maximum temperature once a day—first thing in the morning and we know whom to call if the temperature goes out of range.
- 14. We understand that these temperature logs must be submitted to the Maine CDC Immunization Program at least monthly with copies maintained by the school for three years.
- 15. We have a “Do Not Unplug” sign next to the refrigerator’s electrical outlet.
- 16. In the event of a refrigerator failure, we take the following steps:
 - We call the manufacturer immediately.
 - We notify the Maine CDC Immunization Program.
 - We label the vaccine stating that it has been stored out of range and not to use the vaccine until given the guidance to use from the manufacturer. (this vaccine should be kept in a cold storage unit)
- 17. We keep important phone numbers posted where they are easily accessible including [contact information for vaccine manufacturers](#).