



# FAST FACTS

*A message for health care providers*



## Vaccine Management: Storage & Handling

### Vaccines are fragile!

- Proper storage & handling of vaccines are keys to the success of vaccine preventable diseases eradication efforts.
- Improper vaccine storage & handling can lead to loss of earnings and loss of patient confidence, as some patients have had to be revaccinated due to improper vaccine storage & handling.

### Things you can do to ensure safe vaccine storage and handling in your practice

- **Designate a Vaccine Coordinator** and a back-up person to be in charge of vaccine management.
- **Establish a Written Vaccine Management Plan** including:
  - A general vaccine management plan
    - Maintain vaccine inventory log to document vaccine received, manufacturer/lot number/expiration dates;
    - Order vaccines based on anticipated usage; and
    - Have system in place for rotation of vaccines with shorter expiration dates
  - Plans for power outages and other issues
  - Plans for “out of range” temperatures
- **Review CDC’s online vaccine storage and handling guidance** annually and with new staff (website listed below).
- **Use Proper Storage Equipment**
  - Store vaccines in refrigerator/freezer units with separate exterior doors for the freezer and refrigerator.
  - Dormitory-style refrigerator units are **not** recommended.
  - Use only calibrated thermometers that are recalibrated as per manufacturer recommendations. VFC providers are required to use thermometers that are calibrated with a certificate of traceability and calibration every 2 years.
  - In case of power failure or unforeseen event, have a planned back-up storage unit available.
  - Utilize “Do Not Unplug” signage for refrigerator and freezer outlets and power supplies.
  - Utilize “Do Not Stop Power” warning label for circuit breakers.
- **Maintain Correct Temperatures for Vaccine**
  - Maintain the refrigerator temperatures at 35-46°F (2-8°C) and aim for 40° F (5°C)
  - Maintain freezer temperature at +5°F (-15°C) or colder but no colder than -58°F (-50°C)
- **Maintain Daily Temperature Logs**
  - Monitor and document refrigerator and freezer temperatures **2 times a day** (preferably at start and end of shift) on days when the practice is open.
  - Keep the temperature logs on file for at least 3 years.
- **Take Immediate Action If Issues Arise**
  - Temporarily label vaccines in question “**Do Not Use**” and **move to** a working refrigerator/freezer unit until vaccine is deemed usable by manufacturer or State Health Department.
  - Contact vaccine manufacturer (or Vaccine for Children’s Program if VFC vaccine) to determine how to handle affected vaccines.

### Resources

- CDC. Storage & Handling Toolkit: <http://www2a.cdc.gov/vaccines/ed/shtoolkit/>
- CDC General Recommendations on immunizations: MMWR 2011;60(no.RR-2: 23-27  
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/ACIP-list.htm>
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA).  
<http://www.fda.gov/BiologicsBloodVaccines/Vaccines/ApprovedProducts/ucm093830.htm>
- Immunization Action Coalition (IAC) Manufacturer’s product information: <http://www.immunize.org/packageinserts/>