

## Vaccine Storage and Handling Factsheet

This factsheet can be used as a guide when storing and handling influenza vaccine. For more information, please visit <https://www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/files/publichealth-cdc-im-section7-biological-products.pdf>

### **Transport of Vaccine**

- Vaccine is packed in insulated/thermal carriers with ice packs and a temperature monitor, if applicable. Insulated carriers and ice packs are the responsibility of the individual picking up vaccine from the regional health authority. To prevent the vaccine from freezing, ice packs should be allowed to remain at room temperature for 3-5 minutes before being placed next to the vaccine. The vaccine should remain in the protective cardboard or a paper bag and bubble wrap to avoid direct contact with the ice pack.
- Vaccine should not be transported in the trunk of private vehicles.

### **Storage of Vaccine**

- Regular household refrigerators or bar-sized refrigerators are not recommended, but may be the only option in satellite or temporary clinics.
- Interior temperatures should be monitored daily using a refrigerator thermometer. The optimum temperature for most vaccines is between 2° and 8°C.
- Refrigerators used to store vaccine supplies should not be used to store other products, such as food or other medical supplies or specimens. Vaccine should be stored in the central part of the refrigerator, with space on all sides to allow good air circulation.
- Do not store vaccine on refrigerator doors, or near the cooling units, as these areas represent the extremes of temperature within the refrigerator.
- Refrigerator doors should be opened only as often as necessary, and for only as long as necessary to replace or remove the product.
- Place bottles of water (1 or 2 L soft drink type) on the door, above and below the vaccine in the refrigerator. This will help to maintain the temperature at a constant level (see diagram).
- Refrigerator plugs (and wall outlets) should be located in an area where they will not be knocked out by accident. Alternatives include wiring the refrigerator cord directly into the outlet, or attaching a protective cage over the outlet and a sign Do Not Unplug sign.
- All refrigerators should be defrosted when there is an accumulation of more than 1 cm of ice inside the freezer compartment.
- Refrigerator temperature should be documented twice per day, in the morning and afternoon. Temperature monitoring logs can be found at: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/files/publichealth-cdc-temperature-monitoring-log.pdf>

### **General Storage recommendations**

- Store soon to be expired vaccine at the front; these are to be used first.
- When using multi-dose vials, staff must write, “date first opened” on the vial. Opened multi-dose vials should be used within 30 days or as directed on the product monograph.
- All biological products are subject to deterioration unless stored under carefully controlled temperatures. The range for most products is from 2° to 8° C above freezing point and well below room temperature. Additional information can be found within the vaccine’s product monograph.

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## Diagram of Refrigeration Storage

Freezer

Ice packs

Thermometer

Vaccine

Water Bottles  
to stabilize temperature

Keep door closed

