

## NM VFC Storage and Handling



### NM VFC Vaccines - Procedures to follow if temperature is 'Out of Range' or if vaccines are about to expire:

Vaccines lose their potency if they are not stored in the recommended temperature range. This is true for vaccines kept too warm or too cold.

- All vaccines – *except for Varicella* – should be stored between 35° and 46° Fahrenheit. Target temp: 40° F.
- Varicella vaccine should be stored in the freezer at 5° F or lower. Do not refreeze reconstituted varicella vaccine.

The CDC recommends revaccination of any child vaccinated with compromised vaccine. It is your practice's responsibility to protect your VFC vaccines.

If the thermometer indicates the refrigerator temperature is 47° F or higher or 34° F or lower, vaccines may be compromised.

### VFC Provider Responsibilities:

- NEVER assume that vaccines are damaged. Move the vaccines to a unit with in-range temperatures and mark the vaccines with a sign that states, "DO NOT USE" until the issue is resolved.
- Begin stabilizing temperatures by slightly turning the thermostat knob. Monitor closely until stable. Aim for 40° F in the refrigerator and 5° F or lower in the freezer. Refer to *Vaccine Storage Equipment* in the *Vaccine Storage and Handling Guide* for more information.
- Immediately call your regional VFC contact whose name and telephone number are shown on the temperature log you submit monthly.  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_  
Or, call the VFC Health Educator in Santa Fe at 505-827-2415.

- Using the phone numbers for the vaccine manufacturers shown on the *Troubleshooting Record*, call and document: contact person; date/time of call; and the exact advice given. Then, fax the Troubleshooting Record to the regional contact shown on your temperature log and to Vaccines for Children (VFC) at (505) 827-1064.
- If no advice can be given by the manufacturer(s) concerning the viability of the vaccine, then submit the Troubleshooting Record and await advice from VFC. Do not return or discard any vaccines unless you are instructed to do so by VFC.
- If vaccine is documented to be compromised, complete the *Vaccine Return Form* and fax it to your regional VFC contact person and to VFC (fax number above). In addition, enclose a copy of this form with vaccines being returned to McKesson and retain a copy for your records.

**For information on what to do with excess or expired vaccines, please refer to the NM VFC Frequently Asked Questions.**

For all other questions, call or e-mail one of the following people at VFC:

|                        |                     |  |
|------------------------|---------------------|--|
| <b>Marsha Rippetoe</b> | <b>505-827-2415</b> | <a href="mailto:marsha.rippetoe@state.nm.us">marsha.rippetoe@state.nm.us</a>     |
| <b>Amy Trujillo</b>    | <b>505-827-2147</b> | <a href="mailto:amy.trujillo@state.nm.us">amy.trujillo@state.nm.us</a>           |
| <b>Carly Christian</b> | <b>505-827-2898</b> | <a href="mailto:carolyn.christian@state.nm.us">carolyn.christian@state.nm.us</a> |

6/2009

## SETTING-UP YOUR NEW REFRIGERATOR UNIT

Before placing vaccines in your new unit, follow these simple steps to ensure success:

- Make arrangements in advance to temporarily store vaccines in an alternate VFC unit with VFC certified thermometers; with temperature monitoring twice daily; and with stable temperature readings at the target temps (refrigerator: 40°F and freezer: 5°F or <5°F) until the new unit is approved for vaccine storage.
- Plug your vaccine storage unit directly into the outlets. Never use extension cords or power strips.
- If your unit comes with vegetable bins, remove them from the unit, and fill the space with bottles of water. Do not store vaccines in the vegetable bin space or directly on the floor of the refrigerator.
- Add additional jugs of water to the shelves inside the door and store ice packs in the freezer. This will help maintain a stable, cold temperature if the refrigerator or freezer doors are opened frequently or in case of power failure.
- Place certified thermometers in the center of each unit: one in the refrigerator and one in the freezer. Contact your regional VFC person (name and phone number on the temperature log) or Health Educator (505-827-2415) to obtain thermometers.
- Set refrigerator unit temperature to 40°F and set freezer unit temperature to 5°F or lower. Adjust the temperature in small increments and continue to monitor until the target temperatures are reached.
- Once temperatures are stable at the target temps and prior to placing vaccines in the unit, record temperatures twice a day for a minimum of 5 working days. Then, submit your temperature logs to your regional contact (shown on the bottom of the temperature logs). Obtain approval from that person prior to transferring vaccines to the new units.
- Be sure a DO NOT UNPLUG sticker is posted near the electrical outlet.

For additional information on vaccine storage and handling and on transferring vaccines safely between locations, please reference the New Mexico VFC Vaccine Storage and Handling Guide and the link to the CDC's website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/storage/default.htm>

And, if you have any questions, please contact the VFC Health Educator in Santa Fe at (505) 827-2415.