

HANDLE VACCINES WITH CARE

Temperature

- Maintain a refrigerator temperature of between **2°C to 8°C**
- Check refrigerator temperature twice daily (am & pm) and record on the *Temperature Form*
- Store bottles of water (if space allows) on the empty refrigerator shelves and in the door
- Store ice packs in the freezer
- Open the refrigerator door only when necessary
- Do not store food, beverages or lab specimens in the refrigerator
- Have a refrigerator maintenance check done, at minimum, annually

Transportation

- Either a hard-sided or soft-sided insulated cooler can be used with a tight-fitting lid along with frozen ice packs and insulating material to transport vaccines at all times
- Refrigerate vaccines as soon as you return to the office

Storage & Handling

- Store vaccine on the middle shelves of the fridge, never on the doors or in the crispers
- Keep vaccines in their original packaging to protect from light
- Use a separate tray in the refrigerator for opened vaccines and keep in original packaging. Use these before opening new vials/packages
- Clearly print the opening date on the label of a multi-dose vial. Use a multi-dose vial within 30 days of opening, unless there are specific directions in the product monograph for discontinuing use sooner
- Do not reconstitute vaccines or pre-fill syringes until ready to administer
- Use the correct diluent to reconstitute lyophilized vaccines

Inventory Management

- Rotate vaccines according to expiry date (place those with the longest expiry date at the back)
- Check for expired products every month
- Never use expired vaccine and always return them to the public health unit/office
- Keep vaccine stock at a minimum
- Order only the quantity of vaccine required for one month until the next scheduled pick-up of vaccines

For more information, see the BC Immunization Manual, Appendix E - Management of Biologicals at:
<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/clinical-resources/communicable-disease-control-manual/immunization>

Protect the vaccines. Protect your patients.