

**IN THIS ISSUE:**

- Vaccine Cold Chain Management Guidelines
- Vaccine Pick-up and Transport Requirements

**FROM:**

David L. Mowat, MBChB MPH FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health

**Vaccine Cold Chain Management**

- Vaccines are sensitive to temperatures outside the cold chain range of +2.0°C to +8.0°C.
- To ensure the safety and health of the public, all vaccines must be stored, handled and transported within +2.0°C to +8.0°C.

**Maintaining Cold Chain Temperatures**

- Document refrigerator temperatures **twice daily** on your temperature log.
- Keep fridge temperature logs onsite for a minimum of three (3) years.
- Be sure to complete all the fields on your temperature log, i.e. time, date, staff initials, current, maximum and minimum temperatures
- Clear the minimum and maximum temperatures after checking and recording.
- External min/max thermometer batteries must be replaced every 6 months.
- Do not keep the fridge door open for long periods of time. Check the temperature immediately after opening the fridge door.
- Defrost the freezer when ice build up is greater than 1 cm.
- External min/max thermometer sensor probe must be attached to the bottom of a diluent vial and placed in the diluent box. This must be secured on the middle shelf of fridge.

**Vaccine Storage and Handling**

- Store **only** vaccines and medical products in the vaccine fridge.
- Place water bottles in the lower storage compartment and refrigerator door.
- Store vaccines on internal shelves of the fridge.
- Organize vaccines with the latest expiry date behind products which expire sooner.

- Check expiry dates of vaccines and return expired vaccines to Peel Public Health.
- Store a one-month supply of vaccine at a time.
- Keep vaccine vials in original packaging to prevent light exposure.
- All multi-dose vials must be dated with the date of first use. Multi-dose vials must be used within 30 days of opening, unless otherwise indicated on product monograph.
- Vaccines are to be removed from fridge **for immediate use only**.

**Reporting Cold Chain Exposures**

- Every minimum, maximum or current temperature reading below +2.0°C or above +8.0°C must be reported to Peel Public Health immediately at  
  
905-791-7800 x2840 or x6404
- Do not use vaccine which has been exposed to temperatures outside of this range until Peel Public Health completes an assessment.
- Place a sign on the refrigerator **“DO NOT USE VACCINES until assessed by Peel Public Health”**.

**Vaccine Pick-up Requirements**

- You must have enough coolers to accommodate all vaccine packages ordered.
- Using freezer packs and a thermometer, pre-cool Coolers to a temperature between +2.0 °C and +8.0°C.
- The cooler must contain:
  - A minimum-maximum thermometer.
  - Ice packs or ice blankets.
  - Bubble wrap for insulation.

**NOTE:** It can take approximately 30 minutes for the cooler to cool to cold chain range: +2.0 °C to +8.0°C.

Peel Public Health is in the process of replacing all traditional blue soft sided coolers with Igloo® Playmate hard-sided coolers as recommended by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC).

If you have not received your Igloo® hard-sided cooler, please make a request on the vaccine order form and fax to 905-793-4858.

**Important!**

- Vaccines must be transported and stored between +2.0 °C to +8.0°C
- Document fridge temperatures twice daily
- Keep temperature logs for 3 years
- Call Peel Public Health to report all minimum, maximum, and current temperatures outside of +2.0 °C to +8.0°C.
- Minimize the number of times the vaccine fridge is opened
- If you have not yet received the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care recommended Igloo® Playmate cooler, you can request the cooler from Peel Public Health using the vaccine order form.

For further information and references regarding proper vaccine storage and handling, and specifics around serology and/or re-immunization, please refer to:

**Vaccine Management:**

- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO). (2005). *A Practical Guide for Safe and Effective Office-Based Practices: Medication and Vaccine Storage*, pg. 19
- Ministry of Health and Long-term Care. (2006). *Vaccine Storage and Handling Guidelines*.

**Serology:**

- National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). (2006). *Canadian Immunization Guide*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.