

# Storing Vaccines in a Freezer Unit

Place vaccine in original packaging; if using bins/trays, ensure it is open-top and allows for air circulation through the sides.

Contact the unit manufacturer to determine if vaccine can be stored on the top shelf.

Place a calibrated thermometer in the center of the unit.

Label vaccine by age: pediatric, adolescent, and adult. Separate and label VFC and private stock.

Do not store vaccine in doors, drawers, on floor of the unit, or near or under the cooling vent.

Store water bottles in freezer to help maintain proper temperature.

Rotate stock. Keep vaccine with shorter expiration dates to the front, and use it first. If VFC vaccine will expire in 6 months or less, notify the local health department. If vaccine is expired, **REMOVE** immediately.

Keep temperatures  $-58^{\circ}\text{F}$  to  $+5^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $-50^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $-15^{\circ}\text{C}$ )



## Key Points for Vaccine Storage:

- Stand-alone purpose-built/pharmaceutical grade freezer units are recommended.
- If a purpose-built/pharmaceutical grade unit is not available, it is recommended to use a stand-alone household unit.
- If using a household-grade combination refrigerator/freezer unit, **only** use refrigerator section for storing vaccines.
- Dormitory style units can **NEVER** be used to store vaccine under any circumstances!
- If using a manual defrost unit and frost exceeds either 1 cm or the manufacturer's suggested limit then follow the manufacturer's guidance on defrosting the unit.
- Temperatures below  $-58^{\circ}\text{F}$  are too cold; temperatures above  $+5^{\circ}\text{F}$  are too warm. If temperature is out of range, notify the primary or alternate vaccine coordinator **immediately**. Label the vaccine "Do Not Use," and contact the vaccine manufacturer(s) for guidance. For Vaccines for Children Program (VFC) vaccine, contact the local health department.
- Place vaccines in the center of the unit, with 2 to 3 inches of space from the wall, ceiling, floor, and door.
- Add water bottles in places where vaccine should not be stored to help maintain temperatures.
- Only store vaccines in a vaccine storage unit—no food or beverages!
- **Must** store MMRV, Varicella, and Zoster vaccine live—ZVL (Zostavax<sup>®</sup>) in the freezer. If not reconstituted, MMR vaccine may be stored in either the freezer or refrigerator.

[www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/admin/storage/toolkit/storage-handling-toolkit.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/admin/storage/toolkit/storage-handling-toolkit.pdf)

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