

Storing Vaccines in a Standard Freezer

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

Review manufacturer guidance to ensure vaccine can be stored on the top shelf.

Place a calibrated data logger 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 and label** 'Expired-Do Not Use' immediately.

Keep temperatures -58°F to +5°F (-50°C to -15°C)



Key Points for Vaccine Storage:

- Stand-alone purpose-built/pharmaceutical grade freezer units are recommended.
- These units can be compact, under-the-counter style or large.
- 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 follow the manufacturer's guidance on defrosting the unit. While defrosting, store vaccine according to vaccine storage and handling guidelines.
- Temperatures below -58°F are too cold; temperatures above +5°F are too warm. If temperature is out of range, notify the primary or backup vaccine coordinator **immediately**. Label the vaccine "Do Not Use", store according to manufacturer guidelines, and contact the vaccine manufacturer(s) for guidance. For Vaccines for Children (VFC) vaccine, contact the local health department.
- Store vaccines in the center of the unit, with 2 to 3 inches of space from the wall, ceiling, floor, and door.
- Only store vaccines in a vaccine storage unit—no food or beverages!
- **Must** store MMRV, and Varicella in the freezer. If not reconstituted, MMR-II (Merck) vaccine may be stored in either the freezer or refrigerator. MMR-Priorix (GSK) should only be stored in the refrigerator.

*Add water bottles in places where vaccine should not be stored to help maintain temperatures. Water bottles are not recommended for use with certain pharmaceutical-grade and purpose-built units. Follow the manufacturer's guidance for these units.

[CDC-Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit](#)