

Storing Vaccines in a Refrigerator Unit

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.

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

Place calibrated data logger in the center of the unit.

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

Store water bottles in refrigerator 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 36°F to 46°F (2°C to 8°C)



Key Points for Vaccine Storage:

- Stand-alone purpose-built/pharmaceutical grade refrigerator units are recommended.
- It is not 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!
- Temperatures below 36°F are too cold; temperatures above 46°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!
- Refrigerate all vaccines **except** MMRV, and Varicella. 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](#)