Storage and Handling of Vaccine

General Information

Successful immunization programs are dependent upon proper handling, storage and rigorous cold chain management of vaccines. Cold chain is the process to maintain optimal conditions during the transport, storage, and handling of vaccines. This process begins at the vaccine manufacturer and ends with vaccine administration to the client. The optimum temperature for refrigerated vaccines is between +2°C and +8°C.

Vaccines are subject to gradual loss of potency over time. Potency loss may happen more quickly if vaccines are transported or stored under sub optimal conditions. Biological products when maintained at the correct temperature are subject to gradual loss of potency. Vaccines may not be effective if exposed to excess light, heat or freezing. Products exposed to temperature or conditions outside of cold chain require further investigation before being used or disposed of. If your practice has a cold chain failure, complete a Cold Chain Incident Report and send to Public Health. Public Health must be consulted to determine if exposed products are safe for use.

Vaccines must be:

- Stored under refrigerated conditions between +2°C and +8°C.
- Used before the expiration date. Expiry is the last day of the month indicated on the product packaging.
- Transported between Public Health and other sites in a vaccine cooler with appropriate amount of packing equipment to maintain cold chain temperatures between +2°C and +8°C.
- Reconstituted with the diluent provided for the product. Reconstitution of vaccines should be done immediately prior to vaccine administration. Discard unused reconstituted vaccines.
- Quarantined if cold chain has been compromised. Vaccines must be stored in a fridge until consultation is made with Public Health. **DO NOT dispose of products unless advised by Public Health.**