

## Checklist for Vaccine Storage and Handling

- ☐ Check digital thermometer on fridge twice daily, upon arrival and before closing the office, and record the temperature, time and date in the Temperature Log Book to confirm that the refrigerator temperatures remain between +2°C and +8°C (aim for about +5°C to protect vaccine from freezing).
- ☐ Call the **Vaccine Information Line 613-966-5500 Ext 222** at Hastings Prince Edward Public Health (HPEPH) immediately if the thermometer on the fridge or on your insulated transport bag goes outside the required temperature range of +2°C and +8°C, or if you have any questions. The nurse will return your call within 24 hours or 1 business day.
- ☐ Vaccines are perishable, so maintaining cold chain is critical. They should be stored in their original packaging, which protects them from light, and only one box of each vaccine should be open at a time. Store them in the centre of the fridge on middle shelves, never on the door or in drawers where they may be exposed to warmer temperatures. Allow air to circulate around vaccine packages.
- ☐ Take vaccine out of fridge only when ready to administer and return immediately afterwards. Never leave vaccine outside of the fridge. With multi-dose vials, mark the date of withdrawal of first dose and use within the time indicated on the product monograph.
- ☐ Open the fridge door only when necessary and always ensure that it is tightly closed. Keep the fridge in a well-ventilated area, out of direct sunlight and away from external walls. Place a visible sticker from HPEPH beside the electrical outlet to make sure the fridge is never unplugged.
- ☐ Rotate your vaccines whenever you receive an order. Keep first-to-expire vaccines, or any exposed to a cold chain incident (but approved for use by HPEPH) at the front for easy access.
- ☐ If you have expired or spoiled vaccines, return them in a labelled bag to HPEPH, when you pick up your order, along with a completed Non-Reusable Vaccine Return Record. You may wish to store a reusable labelled bag in your insulated container as a reminder to return them each month.
- ☐ One person in the office must be designated as the lead and one person assigned as back-up (when the lead is not available) to ensure vaccine storage and handling practices are followed. Contact HPEPH for training opportunities and advice.
- ☐ All staff members should be trained in reading, documenting and monitoring the vaccine refrigerator thermometers and temperatures to provide 'back up' in the event of staff vacations or other absences.
- ☐ Change the batteries in the digital thermometers every 6 months, e.g., when the time changes in the fall and the spring. The thermometer should be checked for accuracy during your annual inspection or any time there is a concern.
- ☐ The HPEPH nurse assigned to your office will provide support and education during the annual fridge inspection or any time that you have a question or concern.

## Ordering

- ☐ Try to place your vaccine orders routinely, once a month. Your order will be filled based upon past records of usage at your office. Please indicate on your order form if you are placing a larger order than usual, e.g. you need extra vaccine for a clinic. The ministry recommends your fridge should only hold a one-month supply to reduce wastage in the event of a possible fridge fail.
- ☐ When you place an order on the Vaccine / STI Medication Order Form, it is mandatory to fill out the **# of Doses in stock** column.
- ☐ Your order will be ready for pickup in 72 hours or 3 business days, unless we call you to inform you of a delay. Please do not call or come in to pick up vaccine prior to the 72-hour time period unless other arrangements have been made.
- ☐ If you cannot pick up your order within 2 weeks, please inform HPEPH. After 2 weeks, the vaccine will be placed back in the regular supply, and you will need to submit another order with temperature log.
- ☐ After a cold chain incident, you may not place another order for vaccine until you have recorded 7 consecutive days of stable temps.

## Vaccine Transport

- ☐ Vaccines must be transported, under required cold chain conditions, between +2°C and +8°C, in properly labelled insulated containers. After picking up your vaccine order at HPEPH, return to your office right away and refrigerate the vaccine immediately.
- ☐ Store the insulated bag in the fridge, if there is room, or condition it with ice packs for at least one hour prior to use. There should be enough insulated containers in the office to hold all of the vaccine. Never place an insulated container holding vaccine in the trunk of a car.
- ☐ Gel packs / cold water blankets should be stored in the **fridge** while ice packs should be stored in the **freezer**. Never allow vaccine to come in contact with ice or ice packs; instead, wrap vaccine packages in gel packs / cold water blankets and then place them on the ice packs. You may place insulating material loosely between the gel pack / cold water blankets and ice packs, e.g. bubble wrap / newspaper. Position the temperature monitoring device in the centre of the vaccine package.
- ☐ Vaccine may be temporarily stored in an insulated container for a limited period of time while the fridge is being cleaned or during a planned power outage that may be of short duration.
- ☐ See specific details in the Vaccine Storage and Handling Guidelines, 2012 (or as current) and keep a copy of the guidelines readily available in your office to consult when needed, for example, for the proper process for defrosting a fridge.

## Contingency Plan

- ☐ Every office is responsible for having a written Contingency Plan for vaccine storage, for an office shut down of a week or more, or an emergency such as a power disruption or equipment failure, e.g., Transport vaccine to HPEPH, bagged and labelled, in a properly conditioned insulated container. The Contingency Plan should be posted on or near the vaccine fridge.