

Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit

National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases

Introduction

Vaccination efforts have been successful in preventing and eradicating vaccine-preventable diseases in part because of proper vaccine storage and handling practices. Failure to adhere to recommended specifications for storage and handling can reduce vaccine potency, resulting in inadequate immune responses in the recipients and inadequate protection against disease. Vaccine quality is the shared responsibility of all parties, from the time vaccine is manufactured until it is administered.

Storage and handling errors result in the loss of millions of dollars worth of vaccine each year in the United States. Vaccine failures caused by administration of reduced potency vaccine can affect a large number of patients, causing embarrassment, expense, and potential liability. Patient confidence in vaccines and in vaccine providers is diminished when repeat vaccinations are required to replace invalid doses administered with reduced-potency vaccines.

Vaccine storage and handling mistakes are easily avoidable. This toolkit will provide

you with general guidelines for correct vaccine storage and handling. Specific recommendations for vaccine storage and handling procedures may vary among different state health department immunization programs. This toolkit does not replace these state health department policies but rather is meant to supplement them. Contact the state

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health department immunization program for details regarding recommended vaccine storage and handling procedures in your state.

Vaccine storage and handling recommendations included in the product package inserts should be followed carefully and will provide you with the most up-to-date information. If you have concerns about vaccine that may not have been stored or handled properly, follow your state health department immunization program policy and contact either the manufacturer's quality control office or the immunization program for guidance.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention