

VACCINES MUST BE PROTECTED FROM LIGHT

ALL IMMUNISATION PROVIDERS

Please distribute to all doctors and staff in your practice



Health

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1. Vaccines are sensitive to light
2. All vaccines must be stored in their original cardboard packaging to protect them from light and temperature fluctuations
3. Light affected vaccines must be immediately isolated and reported to the local PHU for advice

NSW Health has received numerous reports of vaccines being removed from their original cardboard packaging to increase refrigerator capacity.

Vaccines are sensitive to light

- Vaccines are sensitive medications that must be protected from light and temperatures outside 2°C to 8°C.
- Vaccines may lose potency if exposed to direct sunlight or ultraviolet (UV) light, including fluorescent light. This means their ability to adequately provide protection against vaccine preventable diseases could be reduced.

Vaccines must be stored in their original cardboard packaging

- The National Vaccine Storage Guidelines, 'Strive for 5' states that all vaccines MUST be stored in their original cardboard packaging to protect against:
 - exposure to sunlight and UV light
 - temperature fluctuations
 - tampering and possible breach of sterility
 - vaccine administration error

Vaccine refrigerator storage

- Vaccines **must not** be removed from their original packaging to make additional space in the refrigerator such as during the influenza season.
- Purpose built vaccine refrigerators must have capacity to store 1 months' supply of government funded and private vaccine stock (as required).
- Consider the volume of vaccines you store during peak times, for example you may require additional vaccine storage capacity to meet demand during the influenza season, consider hiring or purchasing an additional vaccine specific refrigerator.

Reporting a light- exposure breach

- If you become aware of vaccines which have been exposed to light, do not use or discard vaccines until you have received advice from your local public health unit.
- Label the vaccines 'Do not use' and isolate them from other vaccines.
- Use the [Cold Chain Breach and Vaccine Wastage reporting form](#) to report all light exposure breaches to your local public health unit. Include information about how long your practice has been storing vaccines outside of their original cardboard packaging.

Vaccine storage Guidelines and resources

- Please refer to the [National Vaccine Storage Guidelines – Strive for Five \(2019 edition\)](#) and [NSW Health Cold Chain Toolkit](#) for best practice vaccine storage guidelines and to ensure your practice meets the relevant cold chain management requirements.

For further Information please contact your local public health unit on 1300 066 055 or visit www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation.

Yours sincerely

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