

## Vaccine Storage and Handling for 2014-2015 Flu Season

**Attention:** Pharmacies

**Date:** August 7, 2014

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### Pre - Inspection Preparation:

“**New to Flu**” pharmacies may go to your local health unit office any time after August 7, 2014, to pick up the following equipment needed for storage and handling of flu vaccine:

1. A vaccine fridge thermometer that will provide a min/max temperature that displays the temperature to the tenth degree Celsius (e.g. 4.6 °C).
  - a. Each pharmacy will require two min/max thermometers one for your fridge and one for your transport cooler.
  - b. There is a fee for thermometers from the health unit - facilities will be billed directly for any thermometers provided at approximately \$42.00/thermometer.
2. A temperature log book for recording vaccine fridge temperatures twice daily.
3. A Storage and Handling Guidebook.
4. A transport cooler will be provided to facilities by the health unit during your initial Vaccine Storage and Handling fridge inspection planned for September and October.

If you are currently a **participating** pharmacy:

1. Review your Vaccine Storage and Handling Guidebook.
2. Replace the batteries in your vaccine fridge min/max thermometer.
3. Begin recording min/max/current temps in your temperature log book.
4. If you require new resources related to recording temps or guidebook, thermometers (will be charged) please pick these up at the local health unit office.

### All Pharmacies:

Begin the practice of documenting current, minimum and maximum temperatures of the vaccine fridge twice daily by August 7, 2014 or as early as possible in the following manner:

1. Place the end of the vaccine thermometer probe in a small empty vaccine box and place this box in the middle shelf of a fridge; secure it in place.
2. Assign someone (best if one person) to the task of documentation of temperatures at opening and closing of the pharmacy day.
3. Review the thermometer package insert on how to operate the thermometers.
4. Temperature readings must be done twice a day every day the pharmacy is open.
5. The min/max temperatures must be cleared after each reading.
6. Use a separate page in the log book for each month; do not flow months into each other on the same page.
7. A minimum of **4 weeks** of accurate temperature documentation must be provided with each flu vaccine order when faxed to health unit.

### Vaccine Fridge Tips:

1. Ensure that there is adequate space in the fridge where you will store the flu vaccine in prior to the inspection.
2. A vaccine fridge must have adequate number of water bottles placed in the door and/or lower shelves of the fridge to assist in maintaining fridge temperature (mark these bottles so they are not removed and replaced).
3. There must not be any food, drinks, medical or lab specimens in the fridge.
4. Prepare a list of questions to ask during the inspection with the vaccine nurse.

### What to Expect on your Inspection Visit:

1. A vaccine public health nurse will conduct an inspection at your facility early fall.
2. Inspections will not necessarily be scheduled therefore be prepared ahead of time.
3. The nurse will discuss all expectations related to storing and handling of flu vaccine, cold chain procedure, as well as, answer questions you or your staff may have.
4. Resources will be provided during the inspection if your facility does not already have them such as; vaccine transport cooler and thermometer for this cooler; cryopaks and ice packs for the transport cooler; instructions on how
5. .to pack a transport cooler for vaccine, vaccine order form, vaccine return form, storage and handling guidebook, and temperature log book.
6. The nurse must determine that there is sufficient space in the fridge for storage of multiple doses of flu vaccine before approving the fridge.
7. The nurse will compare the pharmacy fridge thermometer to a health unit thermometer.
8. The temperature log book will be reviewed for accuracy and within recommended limits.
9. The inspection will be a pass or fail based on the above expectations.
10. It may not always be possible to revisit a failed location.
11. Review the "How to pack a vaccine cooler" diagram for transporting of vaccines.

### Post Inspection:

1. Twice-daily vaccine fridge temperatures must be maintained (for duration of flu vaccine storage).
2. Ensure your cooler ice packs are in the freezer and the cryopaks (water blankets) are in the fridge at all times.
3. Cover the vaccine transport cooler thermometer probe with an empty vaccine box.
4. Complete the flu vaccine order form (**must use your Ministry pre-qualification facility name**) and submit along with a minimum 4 weeks of temperature documentations to the vaccine-designated fax number (on the vaccine order form).
5. Vaccine ordering and distribution details will be determined closer to the flu season and communicated to all facilities.

### When to Call the Health Unit:

1. When the temperature range is out of the +2 to +8°C range, the health unit is to be contacted immediately via the 8806 extension. Any minimum, maximum or current temperature outside of the acceptable is considered a cold chain event and requires investigation of vaccine stability. Failure to report will result in removal of flu vaccine storage from the facility.
2. Extension 8806 is for reporting of time sensitive issues such as adverse events, cold chain failures and questions about dosage.
3. Extension 8808 is for vaccine order questions related to the ordering process, when leaving a message please provide your Ministry Pre-qualified Facility Name, a contact name and direct phone number.

### When not to call the Health Unit:

1. Please refrain from calling the vaccine preventable disease team after each vaccine order request to see if your order has been received:
  - a. Please program your fax machine to provide a receipt or rejection of fax submission.

- b. The public health unit is limited in responding to a high volume inquiries related to receipt of vaccine orders during flu season.

**Important Dates:**

- Pharmacy flu vaccine orders should be submitted after October 21, 2014.
- Flu vaccine distribution to pharmacies will occur after October 29, 2014.
- All flu vaccine should be returned to the health unit by March 15, 2015 with a completed vaccine return form. Flu vaccine is not to be kept past this date.
- Collingwood Health unit office will not be accessible from Aug 13-27, 2014 due to renovations.

**Information & Resources are available on the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit website:**

<http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/JFY/HealthProfessionals/Pharmacists.aspx>