HALDIMAND-NORFOLK HEALTH UNIT

HEALTHINFO

SUMMER 2010

Communiqué

Back-up Vaccine Storage

In an effort to reduce the wastage of publicly funded vaccine, the health unit is offering to store your vaccine during periods when you are not able to monitor your vaccine fridge, such as during holidays. We will also store your vaccine in the event of a power failure or fridge malfunction if you have no other back-up power source. The Simcoe health unit office has a purpose built, monitored vaccine fridge. Haldimand facilities are welcome to use this service in Simcoe.

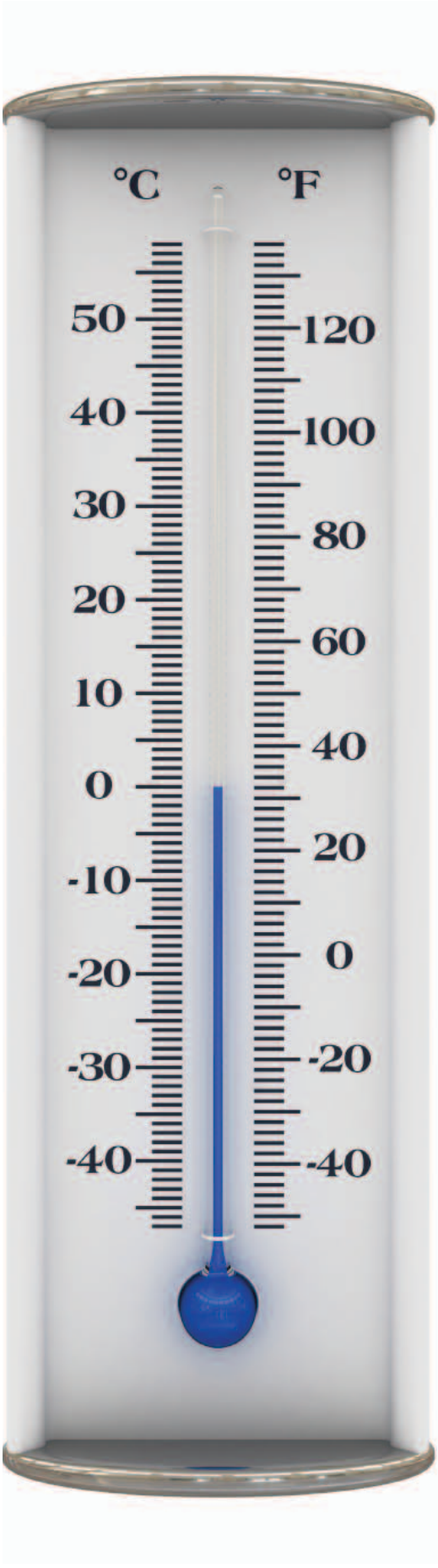
What you need to do:

1. Call ahead, speak to a member of the Vaccine Preventable Disease Team to let us know when you will need to store your vaccine.
2. Ensure vaccine is transported to/ from the health unit under cold chain +2°C to +8°C.
3. Follow the "Vaccine Transporter Packing Instructions" and "Maintaining the Vaccine Cold Chain; Preconditioning and Packing Instructions for Hard-Sided Coolers" provided by the health unit.
4. Package your vaccine, clearly marked with your office name.

Efficient vaccine storage and handling is a key component of immunization programs. It is a shared responsibility from the time the vaccine is manufactured until it is administered. You can be assured that while your vaccine is in our fridge it will be maintained under cold chain. Whether or not you maintain cold chain is your responsibility.

Online Immunization Reporting

The Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit now has immunization reporting online. Parents can go to www.hnhu.org and on the left hand side, under immunization, they can input their child's information. Immunization records can be lost or the doctor may relocate. A child may need an updated record for starting school, transferring to another school, university or college, camp, employment, emergency health care or travel. By reporting online, their record is safely stored. If a parent has any questions, they may contact a member of the Vaccine Preventable Disease Program at the health unit.



What to Do When the Refrigerator Temperature is Below +2° or Above +8° C

A maximum, minimum or current temperature reading below +2 ° or above +8° C means that your vaccines may have lost their potency.

In this case, you should:

- Segregate the exposed vaccines in the refrigerator by placing these vaccines in a labelled container (or bag), marked with the date and time and **"DO NOT USE".** Do not use any of the exposed vaccines until your local public health unit has assessed whether any of the vaccines can still be used.
- If possible, move the vaccine to another stable, monitored refrigerator within your facility while you stabilize the temperature in the original refrigerator.
- In addition, if the current temperature is too high or too low, move these vaccines to a properly functioning, monitored refrigerator, **OR** place the vaccines in a monitored insulated container with icepacks and a maximum-minimum thermometer inside the vaccine package. This will limit the number of temperature excursions outside of the +2° to +8° C range and help to avoid vaccine wastage.
- Insulated containers will only keep vaccines at the appropriate temperatures for a short period. Vaccines will need to be moved to a functioning, monitored refrigerator if the refrigerator does not stabilize at the required +2° to +8° C range within a couple of hours.
- **Call your local public health unit immediately to report the vaccine exposure.**
- Check that your thermometer is working correctly (e.g., check the probe placement, check the battery). If in doubt, replace the battery.
- After checking the thermometer and the refrigerator (to make sure it is plugged in), record the date, time and temperature in your temperature logbook. Always remember to reset your maximum-minimum thermometer after each recorded temperature.
- Never use or discard the vaccine until your local public health unit has assessed the situation.

Returning Vaccines

- Call the health unit **immediately** for advice if you suspect that vaccine has been exposed to temperatures below +2° or above +8° C.
- **Never discard vaccine with your office waste.**
- Always return expired or spoiled vaccine to your vaccine supply source (health unit) for disposal. These vaccines are returned to the Ontario Government Pharmaceutical and Medical Supply Service (OGPMSS).

Routine Vaccine orders

- Maintain no more than a one-month supply of vaccines in your fridge at a time.
- Once vaccines leave the health unit inventory, they cannot be returned for restocking. Ordering excess vaccine can increase the risk of wastage.
- To know how much vaccine you will need, look at the average amount of each vaccine you use each month.
- Check vaccine expiry dates regularly.

Reference: Ministry of Health and Long Term Care Vaccine Storage and Handling Guidelines - January 2006

ADVERSE EVENT FOLLOWING IMMUNIZATION (AEFI)

What is an Adverse Event Following Immunization (AEFI)?

An AEFI is any untoward medical occurrence in a vaccine which follows immunization and which does not necessarily have a causal relationship with the administration of the vaccine. The adverse event may be any unfavourable and/or unintended sign, abnormal laboratory finding, symptom or disease.

What type of AEFI should be reported?

AEFIs should be reported when the event:

- **Has a temporal association with a vaccine.**
- **Has no other clear cause at the time of reporting:** A causal relationship between immunization and the event that follows does not need to be proven and submitting a report does not imply or establish causality. Sometimes the patient's medical history, recent disease, concurrent illness/condition and/or concomitant medication(s) can explain the event(s).

Of particular interest are those AEFIs which meet one or more of the following criteria:

- **Is of a serious nature:** A serious adverse event is one that is life threatening or results in death, requires hospitalization or prolongation of an existing hospitalization, results in residual disability or causes congenital malformation.
- **Requires urgent medical attention.**
- **Is unusual or unexpected:** An event that has either not been identified previously or one that has been identified previously but is, at current, being reported at an increased frequency. For additional information regarding unusual or unexpected events, please refer to the Canadian Immunization Guide, which can be accessed on-line at http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/cig-gci/index-eng.php.

If there is any doubt as to whether or not an event should be reported, a conservative approach should be taken and the event should be reported.

Who reports AEFIs?

AEFI reports originate from multiple sources in Canada. Vaccine manufacturers are required by law (Food and Drugs Act and Regulations) to report to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), all serious AEFIs with vaccines for which they are the Market Authorization Holder, within 15 days of knowledge of their occurrence. No other legal requirement for reporting AEFIs exists nationally. Several provinces have enacted mandatory AEFI reporting requirements. However, overall reports are generally submitted on a voluntary basis by vaccine providers and other health care professionals.

The usual and preferred reporting flow is from local or regional health units to central provincial/territorial immunization programs. Reports are forwarded to PHAC electronically, or in hard copy by the provinces and territories, after all personal identifying information has been removed. On occasion, reports may be submitted directly to PHAC by vaccine manufacturers, travel health clinics, pharmacists, physicians or the general public.

How is privacy and confidentiality of information ensured?

Personal health information is confidential. All provinces, territories and PHAC take great care to protect personal health information. Health care workers are encouraged to discuss with clients, or the clients' caregiver, the reason for reporting the AEFI and the confidentiality of all collected information. For further information regarding the protection of personal health information, you may contact the privacy representatives at your local public health office. Alternatively, the Privacy Act can be accessed online at the following address: http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/P-21/index.html.

Where and when can copies of the AEFI report form be obtained?

The new AEFI Report form was introduced early in 2009 in most, but not all provinces and territories. The form itself, along with information regarding its implementation in Canada, will be published on the Web at http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/pdf/hc4229e.pdf. In addition, the form can be viewed in the Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties and hard copies can be obtained from local public health units, hospitals, clinics (including travel clinics), etc.

Reference: Public Health Agency of Canada User Guide: Report of Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) January 2009

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Communiqué is a newsletter distributed by the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit for those who work in the area of Vaccines and Vaccine Preventable Diseases. If you have ideas or suggestions of topics for future Communiqués, please contact the Health Unit.

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