

# Maintaining the Vaccine Cold Chain

## Preconditioning and Packing Instructions for Hard-Sided Coolers

Research has shown that a properly packed cooler for transporting vaccine can safely maintain cold chain (**between 2°C and 8°C**) for **1 ½ hours during transport**. The Health Unit has supplied hard-sided coolers to transport vaccine from the Health Unit to physician's offices. The old blue soft-sided coolers will no longer be used. Included with the hard-sided cooler are two flexible insulating blankets, a min-max thermometer and a gel pack. Please use the following instructions to condition the cooler and pack vaccine for transport. There are different instructions for summer (April until October) and winter (October until April). Summer configuration has a frozen gel pack on the top of the insulating blanket and the winter configuration has a chilled gel pack on top of the insulating blanket.

### Summer Configuration:

#### EQUIPMENT MUST BE PRECONDITIONED PRIOR TO USE.

1. Precondition:
  - a. The cooler: **Place three frozen gel packs inside the cooler for 20 minutes** prior to leaving the office.
  - b. The flexible insulating blankets: **Place in the refrigerator for at least two hours prior to use**. Many offices store them in the fridges.
  - c. The maximum-minimum thermometer: **Place in refrigerator for at least two hours prior to use**.

Just prior to leaving your office remove the three frozen gel packs from the cooler. Working quickly, wrap the probe of the min-max thermometer in the insulating blankets, put a frozen pack (fresh from the freezer-not used to condition the cooler) on top and place all in the hard-sided cooler. The "out" temperature reading must be between 2°C and 8°C.

2. When picking up vaccine at the Health Unit or your designated pick-up location, the minimum-maximum probe must be placed inside the cooler with the vaccine and the display must be visible on the outside of the cooler. The vaccine is then wrapped on the bottom in a flexible, insulating blanket.
3. The second insulating blanket is then placed on top of the vaccine.

A frozen gel pack (**which has been in the freezer for at least 12 hours**) should be placed on top of the flexible, insulating blanket. For outside temperatures over 38°C, add an additional frozen gel pack on the top.

### Winter Configuration:

#### EQUIPMENT MUST BE PRECONDITIONED PRIOR TO USE.

1. Precondition:
  - a. The cooler: **Place three frozen gel packs inside the cooler for at least 20 minutes** prior to leaving the office.
  - b. The flexible insulating blankets: **Place in the refrigerator for at least two hours prior to use**. Many offices store them in the fridges.
  - c. The maximum-minimum thermometer: **Place in the refrigerator for at least two hours prior to use**.

Just prior to leaving your office remove the frozen gel packs from the cooler. Working quickly, wrap the probe of the min-max thermometer in the insulating blankets, put a pre-conditioned gel pack (chilled in the fridge, not frozen-see #4) on top and place all in the hard-sided cooler. The "out" temperature reading must be between 2°C and 8°C.

2. When picking up the vaccine from the health unit or designated pick up location, the min-max probe must be placed with the vaccine inside the cooler and the display must be visible on the outside of the cooler. The display must read in the 2° to 8°C range. The vaccine is then placed, with the probe, on the bottom flexible, insulating blanket.
3. The second flexible, insulating blanket is wrapped on top of the vaccine.
4. The gel pack, which has been **preconditioned in the refrigerator for two hours**, is placed on top of the insulating blanket.

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**The vaccine must be immediately transported to your facility and placed in the vaccine refrigerator.** Should the temperature go below 2°C or above 8°C call the Health Unit for instructions. We have a diagram included with written instructions.

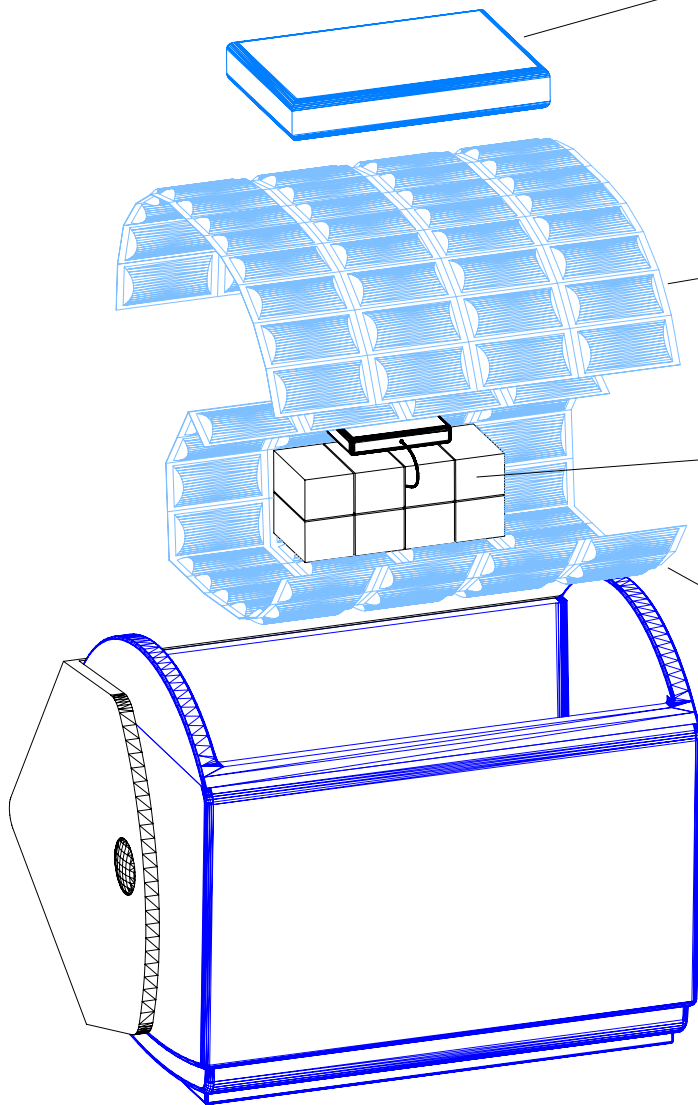
If you have any questions concerning the coolers or cold chain please call a member of the Vaccine Preventable Disease Program at the Health Unit at 519-426-6170 or 905-318-6623.

*Continued on reverse.*

# Vaccine Transporter Packing Instructions

## Playmate 16 Configuration

### Kit # 70056



**624g (22 oz) Soft-Sided Gel Pack 81011**  
**13cm x 23cm x 3cm**

**Freezer Ice Packs (temperatures -10°C to -20°C)**

Precondition ice packs prior to packing vaccine.

- Consider differences in summer and winter transport conditions.
- Winter transport may require gel packs to be preconditioned from the refrigerator at 2°C to 8°C.

**Outer 12 ml Flexible Insulating Blanket 85000**

- Pre-conditioned in fridge at 2°C to 8°C wrapped around vaccines and inner, flexible, insulating blanket.

**Vaccines**

- Stored in refrigerator at 2° C to 8°C.
- Position min/max thermometer probe inside a vaccine box.

**Inner 12 ml Flexible, Insulating Blanket 85000**

- Pre-conditioned in refrigerator at 2°C to 8°C wrapped around vaccines.

**Playmate 16 Insulated, Hard-sided Cooler 70028**

15 l (16 qt) interior volume.

25.9cm x 40.3cm x 37.8cm H outside dimensions.

- Pre-chill insulated cooler with ice packs from the freezer prior to packing vaccine.

*Note: Additional ice packs may be required depending on cold-life needed for the length of transport. Additional insulating material, e.g. bubble wrap, Styrofoam chips, crumpled or shredded newspaper, may also be required (placed on the bottom of the cooler) to allow for cool air circulation.*

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