

Vaccine Storage and Handling Factsheet

This factsheet can be used as a guide when storing and handling vaccine that is transported and stored between 2° to 8° C. For more information on vaccine storage, please visit: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/files/publichealth-cdc-im-section7-biological-products.pdf>

Transport of Vaccine

- Vaccine is to be packed in insulated/thermal carriers with ice packs. Insulated carriers and ice packs are the responsibility of the health care provider picking up vaccine from the regional depot within NL Health Services (NLHS). To avoid freezing, the ice packs should be allowed to remain at room temperature for 3 to 5 minutes before being placed next to the vaccine. When vaccine is picked up from NLHS it will be packed, typically in a paper bag. Place the paper bag with vaccine into the insulated carrier. **(Note: please note, the process may vary between NLHS depots. Depot staff will communicate transportation requirements when vaccine is ordered).**
- Vaccines should not be transported in the trunk or rear of the van or car in private vehicles.
- When vaccine arrives at its destination, it should be immediately placed in a vaccine fridge regulated at 2° to 8° C.

Specific Storage Requirements of Influenza Vaccine

- NLHS will provide health care providers with influenza vaccine that is stored at 2° to 8° C. Vaccine should be stored in its original packaging and protected from light.
- Vaccine stored at 2° to 8° C that is not punctured is stable until the expiry date identified on the vaccine vial label.
- Vaccine stored at 2° to 8° C that has been **punctured** must be utilized **within 28 days**.

Specific Storage Requirements of Moderna Spikevax Vaccine

- NLHS will be providing health care providers with thawed Moderna vaccine at 2° to 8° C. Moderna vaccine will be available in two presentations: multi-dose vial and pre-filled syringe.
- Moderna pre-filled syringes and vaccine vials that are **not punctured** are stable for **60 days** at 2° to 8° C. You will be advised of this expiry date upon receiving vaccine at your regional depot. Please note, the expiry date is NOT the date printed on the vaccine vial, you will need to follow the expiration date provided by NLHS.
- Moderna vaccine that has **not been punctured** is also stable at room temperature for up to **12 hours**.
- Once a Moderna vaccine vial **is punctured**, it can be stored at room temperature but must be discarded after **12 hours**.

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Specific Storage Requirements of Pfizer Comirnaty Vaccine

- NLHS will be providing health care providers with pre-filled syringes of Pfizer BioNTech Comirnaty vaccine stored at 2° to 8° C.
- Pfizer vaccine in pre-filled syringe presentation is stable at 2° to 8° C until the expiration date noted on the syringe label.
- After removing the tip cap and attaching an appropriate needle, the prefilled syringes should be used immediately. If it cannot be used immediately, it must be used within 4 hours.

General Storage Guidelines for Vaccine

- Regular household refrigerators or bar sized refrigerators are not recommended.
- Refrigerators used to store vaccines should not be used to store other products, such as food or other medical supplies or specimens. Vaccines should be stored in the central part of the refrigerator, with space on all sides to allow good air circulation.
- The temperature of the vaccine fridge must be maintained at 2° to 8° C. This can be verified with the use of a data logger or vaccine thermometer.
- Refrigerator temperature should be documented twice a day, morning and afternoon. Temperature monitoring logs can be found at: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/files/publichealth-cdc-temperature-monitoring-log.pdf>
- Do not store vaccines on refrigerator doors or near the cooling units, as these areas represent the extremes of temperature within the refrigerator.
- Refrigerator doors should be left ajar for extended periods of time.
- Place bottles of water on the door as well as above and below shelves where vaccine is stored, if possible. This will help to maintain a constant temperature (see diagram).
- Refrigerator plugs (and wall outlets) should be located in an area where they will not be knocked out by accident. Alternatives include wiring the refrigerator cord directly into the outlet or attaching a protective cage over the outlet and a sign *Do Not Unplug* attached.
- All refrigerators should be defrosted when there is an accumulation of more than 1 cm of ice inside the freezer compartment.
- All biological products are subject to deterioration unless stored under carefully controlled temperatures. The range for most products is from 2° to 8° C above freezing point and well below room temperature. Additional information can be found within the vaccine's product monograph.
- For vaccine temperature excursions outside the temperature parameters listed above, please contact mirandaodriscoll@gov.nl.ca for further direction on vaccine stability.
- For more information of provincial immunization programs and vaccine availability, visit the [Provincial Immunization Manual](#).

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Diagram of Refrigeration Storage

Ice packs

Thermometer

Vaccine

Water Bottles
to stabilize temperature

Keep door closed

