Refrigerator and Freezer Vaccine Storage Guidelines

Vaccine safety is patient safety. Do your part to maintain vaccine integrity.

Storage temperatures:
Refrigerator: +2°C to +8°C. Aim for +5°C.
Freezer: -15°C or colder

Storing:
1. Place vaccines in breathable plastic mesh baskets.
2. Label each basket with vaccine type. Keep labeling methods consistent across all baskets.
3. Keep baskets 5-8 cm away from other baskets and from walls to promote air flow.
4. Place vaccines in the middle of the unit, away from vents, walls and coils.
5. Store empty shelves and doors with full water bottles (refrigerator) or frozen packs (freezer) and label as 'DO NOT USE'.
6. Place a recommended temperature monitoring device in the unit. Place a warning sign on the storage unit that says, ‘Do not adjust refrigerator or freezer temperature controls.’
7. Store vaccines with similar packaging and names (e.g., HB and Hib or Tdap and Td) in different locations of the unit.
8. Keep vaccines in their original packaging to protect against exposure to light.
9. Always store foods in a separate unit.
10. Frozen vaccines must be stored in a frost-free freezer.

*Do not use bar-style fridges or freezers and/or cyclic defrost freezers, as they can result in significant temperature variations in the unit.

Maintenance:
- Review expiration dates regularly and rotate vaccines with closer expiration to the front to be used first.
- Remove expired vaccines from the unit and label them as expired.
- Place unit on a dedicated circuit with safety lock or outlet cover.
- Place a ‘DO NOT UNPLUG’ sign near the outlet and on the unit door.
- Monitor and log BOTH the temperature of the unit and room temperature twice a day.
- Reduce the number of times the unit is opened during the day to prevent fluctuations in temperature.
- Monitor vaccine storage to prevent shortage and over-ordering during low- and high-season demands.

Reference: