

# MAINTAIN the Cold Chain

## HOW TO KEEP YOUR VACCINES EFFECTIVE



### THE THERMOMETER

- **Record temperatures twice a day** with a thermometer that shows the minimum and maximum temperatures. The best type to use is a digital thermometer with a minimum and maximum function.

The temperatures in any cold storage unit or refrigerator will fluctuate during the day. By recording the temperatures at the beginning and end of the day you can adjust the temperature control dial in the fridge to keep the temperature between 2 and 8°C. Keeping a temperature log will also help the Health Unit vaccine nurses to assess whether any of your vaccines can't be used because of temperature changes.
- **Clear the minimum and maximum temperature** after you record them. Without clearing both of these temperatures the next readings you take won't be accurate.
- **Keep the temperature probe in the middle of the fridge.**

Keeping the probe in the box and with the vaccines allows the thermometer to keep an accurate record of the temperatures that the vaccines experience, rather than any changes in the air temperature of the fridge. To do this, tape the probe to a vaccine bottle and place this inside a vaccine box. Keep the probe in the box and store it in the body of the fridge with the vaccines. If the probe is at the back or touching the side of the fridge the temperature readings won't be accurate.

### THE VACCINES

- **Call the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit** at 519-258-2146 ext. 1121 or 1122 if the temperature in your fridge is **below 2°C or above 8°C**. The vaccine nurses will be able to give you information on the next steps that need to be taken.
- **Store vaccines with other vaccines only.**

Have a second fridge to keep any food, drinks, or laboratory specimens cold.
- **Store the vaccines in the body of the fridge** and away from the sides.

This allows air to circulate around the compartment and keep the temperature stable. Keep vaccines away from the sides, door, back, or floor of the fridge. Don't store them in enclosed bins or near the cold air outlet from the freezer. The temperatures in these areas may vary from the body of the fridge and make the vaccines ineffective.
- **Write the date on multi-dose vaccines when the first dose is withdrawn.** Once opened, these vaccines mustn't be used after 30 days (unless otherwise indicated on product monograph). Be sure to monitor all vaccine expiry dates and properly dispose of any that have expired.

### THE VACCINE FRIDGE

- **Keep the fridge door closed tightly** and make sure it's closed after each time the door is opened. Check door is closed tightly at the end of the day. This helps maintain the proper temperature.
- **Store large jugs of water in the door** and on the floor of the fridge. This will help maintain a stable temperature in the body of the fridge and can help keep the vaccine viable during a short power failure.
- **Defrost fridge** when there is more than 1 cm of ice in the freezer compartment. Ice build up affects the temperature of the fridge.