

Medication Storage

Medications (including vaccines) are to be stored in a clean, organized and secure space. The space should be accessible only to designated staff.

- All medications are to be stored in the containers in which they are received.
- Medications are to be stored separately from poisons.
- Multi-dose vials used for more than one patient/resident are kept in a centralized medication area and should not enter the immediate patient/resident treatment area (e.g., patient/resident room). If multi-dose vials enter the immediate patient/resident treatment area they should be dedicated for single-resident use only.

Medication Refrigerators

- All medications requiring refrigeration shall be stored separately in a refrigerator that is locked or in a locked room.
- Only medication is stored in medication refrigerators. If food items, such as applesauce, are used to administer medications, they are to be stored in the patient/resident nourishment refrigerator.
- Ensure temperatures are maintained and monitored in accordance with manufacturer specifications and monitor according to national guidelines (see CDC vaccine storage and handling).
 - Medications can be compromised by exposure to temperatures beyond the safe temperature range as determined by the manufacturer. Drugs stored at out-of-range temperature for significant periods of time may become ineffective and compromise the health of the patient/resident.
- Maintain the inside temperature of a medication refrigerator within a 2° to 8° Celsius range (or 36° to 46° Fahrenheit range).
- Avoid storing medications or vaccines in the vegetable bins or on the door compartments (temperature in these areas can vary significantly from the body of the refrigerator).
- Do not overpack the refrigerator; place medications in such a way that air can circulate around them.

Measures for Safe Medication Storage

- Ensure the medication storage area is cleaned on a routine basis.
- Ensure medication bins are cleaned on a routine basis.
- Assess individual patient/resident bins for any out-of-date medications.
- Educate personnel who handle medications requiring refrigeration on how to properly monitor and document temperatures.
- Educate personnel on how to handle temperature deviations.
 - Document and record any temperature deviations. Include in the documentation the possible reason for the temperature deviation (e.g., power outage) and the resulting action taken.
 - Consult with your pharmacy on the stability and whether it is safe to administer any medication that may have been compromised.