

Transporting Refrigerated Vaccine

Guidelines for vaccine transport and short-term storage

- The procedure below for packing vaccine will keep all vaccines (**except varicella vaccine**) within recommended temperatures for 12 hours during transport and/or storage at room temperatures (inside a car, building, etc.). It will also maintain recommended temperatures if the cooler is exposed to outside temperatures as low as -4°F for one of those 12 hours.
- If the vaccine will be stored in refrigerators after transport, be sure those refrigerators have maintained temperatures between 35°F and 46°F for at least 3 to 5 days.

Assemble packing supplies

1. **Cooler.** Use hard plastic Igloo-type coolers. Attach a “Vaccines: Do Not Freeze” label to the cooler.
2. **“Conditioned” cold packs.** Condition frozen gel packs by leaving them at room temperature for 1 to 2 hours until the edges have defrosted and packs look like they’ve been “sweating.” Cold packs that are not conditioned can freeze vaccine. **Do not use dry ice.**
3. **Thermometer.** Prepare the thermometer by placing it in the refrigerator at least 2 hours before you pack the vaccine.
4. **Packing material.** Use two 2-inch layers of bubble wrap. Not using enough bubble wrap can cause the vaccine to freeze.



Pack vaccine

1. Cold packs

Spread conditioned cold packs to cover only half of the bottom of the cooler.



2. Bubble wrap & Thermometer

Completely cover the cold packs with a 2-inch layer of bubble wrap. Then, place the thermometer/probe on top of the bubble wrap directly above a cold pack.



3. Vaccine

Stack layers of vaccine boxes on the bubble wrap. Do not let the boxes of vaccine touch the cold packs.



4. Bubble wrap

Completely cover the vaccine with another 2-inch layer of bubble wrap.



5. Cold packs

Spread “conditioned” cold packs to cover only half of the bubble wrap. Make sure that the cold packs do not touch the boxes of vaccine.



6. Form & display

Fill the cooler to the top with bubble wrap. Place the thermometer’s digital display and the *Return or Transfer of Vaccines Report* form on top. It’s ok if temperatures go above 46°F while packing.



As soon as you reach the destination site, check the vaccine temperature. If the vaccine is:

- Between 35°F and 46°F, put it in the refrigerator.
- Below 35°F or above 46°F, contact your local MILVAX Regional Analyst or USAMMA immediately at (301) 619-4318/1197. Then label the vaccine “Do Not Use” and put in the refrigerator. Do not discard the affected vaccine until USAMMA confirms the compromise.

Adapted by the MILVAX Agency courtesy of the California Department of Public Health, Immunization Branch.