

## HICMR INFORMATION SHEET: DECEMBER 2008

### CHECKLIST FOR SAFE VACCINE HANDLING AND STORAGE

#### - STRIVE 4 FIVE

#### 1. VACCINE STORAGE:

##### WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?

- Freezing of vaccines is the most common reason for vaccine damage and loss in Australia.
- Most vaccines are considered damaged at 0 °C.
- For vaccines that are cold or freeze-sensitive the loss of potency is immediate and these vaccines must not be administered.
- When vaccines are exposed to repeated episodes of heat the loss of vaccine potency is cumulative and cannot be reversed.
- All vaccines should be stored in the range of +2°C to +8°C. Strive for 5! as this gives a greater leeway for protection from temperature fluctuations.



#### 5. KEY REFERENCES

The key references that should be available for your facility's vaccine management are:

1. National Vaccine Storage Guidelines, 2005: Strive 4 Five.
2. NHMRC: The Australian Immunisation Handbook. 9th edition, 2008.

#### 2. CHECKLIST FOR SAFE VACCINE HANDLING AND STORAGE

The following are the most important things you can do to safeguard your vaccine supply:

- ✓ Have designated trained person/s in charge of the handling and storage of your vaccines.
- ✓ Have a trained backup person in charge of the handling and storage of the vaccines.
- ✓ Maintain a vaccine inventory log that documents - Vaccine name and number of doses received; date vaccine received, arrival condition of the vaccine; vaccine manufacturer/supplier and lot number, vaccine expiry date.
- ✓ Maintain a temperature monitoring chart for each vaccine fridge to record at least daily temperature recordings and on vaccine receipt.
- ✓ Store vaccines in the middle of the refrigerator and not in the door.
- ✓ Stock and rotate vaccine supplies so that the newest vaccine of each type is placed in front.
- ✓ Audit your vaccine protocols and vaccine storage records annually.

*Refer HICMR Policy: Vaccine Storage*

#### 3. MAINTAIN AND KNOW YOUR REFRIGERATOR/EQUIPMENT

- ✚ Ensure your refrigerator has the capacity to store your maximum vaccine storage needs, (including Influenza season).
- ✚ Keep refrigerator door openings to a minimum.
- ✚ Do not store food and other goods in the refrigerator.
- ✚ Ensure your refrigerator is maintained/serviced regularly, eg. annually.
- ✚ Ensure you use an appropriate thermometer that measures temperature in Celsius not Fahrenheit.
- ✚ Check the accuracy of your thermometer at least annually.
- ✚ Change your thermometer battery at least every 12 months, or as indicated by the manufacturer.
- ✚ Dedicated vaccine refrigerators are recommended. If domestic refrigerators are in use refer to National Vaccine Storage Guidelines for compliance details.
- ✚ Alert others: Place a sticker on the power point, eg. "Vaccine Refrigerator- **Do not turn off or disconnect**".
- ✚ Know how to manage a power failure, eg. pack a cooler with ice packs/gels – see below.

#### 4. ACTIONS IF THE REFRIGERATOR TEMP IS OUTSIDE 2-8°C

In the event of a refrigerator or temperature failure; the following steps should be taken:

- ❖ Place vaccines in a location with adequate refrigeration.
- ❖ Mark all exposed vaccines and separate them from undamaged vaccines.
- ❖ Note the refrigerator temperature and contact the vaccine manufacturer/supplier or health department re instructions as to whether the affected vaccines can be used.
- ❖ If able to be used, mark the vials with the revised expiration date provided.
- ❖ Prepare contact numbers in advance, eg:

*"If the temperature is outside 2-8 °C Contact:*

- *Manufacturer Phone Number:* \_\_\_\_\_
- *Supplier Phone Number:* \_\_\_\_\_
- *State Health Department Phone Number:* \_\_\_\_\_"