

Tips for Successful Participation in the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program

Follow these tips for vaccine storage and handling:

1. Have more than one person responsible for storage and handling of vaccines
2. Have certified, calibrated thermometers in the refrigerator and freezer compartments
3. Record temperatures for both the refrigerator and freezer twice per day (if needed adjust the thermostat)
 - a. Refrigerator: 35° to 46° Fahrenheit (aim for 40° Fahrenheit)
 - b. Freezer: 5° to -58° Fahrenheit (aim for below 0° Fahrenheit)
 - c. Document out-of-range temperatures and follow the VFC Program Incident Checklist to take immediate action
 - d. Keep all documentation at least for three years
4. Keep all vaccines in a manner that does not jeopardize its quality
 - a. Do not store food or biological samples in the vaccine storage unit
 - b. Do not store any vaccine in the doors of the refrigerator or freezer
 - c. Do not store any vaccine in any type of closed container
5. Use a VFC Program approved storage unit for all vaccines
 - a. For frozen vaccine:
 - i. Stand alone freezer
 - b. For refrigerated vaccine:
 - i. Stand alone refrigerator and/or
 - ii. The refrigerator section of a combined refrigerator/freezer with separate external refrigerator and freezer doors (e.g. household-style appliance)
 - c. For a combined refrigerator/freezer, separate thermostat controllers are helpful to maintain respective target temperatures
6. Make sure the vaccine storage unit is secure
 - a. Plug the power cord(s) directly in to the wall (do not use power strips or surge protectors)
 - b. Keep “Do Not Unplug” stickers on the outlet where the power cord is connected and on the vaccine storage unit room or outlet-specific switch on the circuit breaker
 - c. Refrigerator and freezer doors must be closed properly
7. Have a written emergency plan in place for a power outage or natural disaster

**For more information please contact the Florida VFC Program at:
(800) 483-2543 or visit: www.immunizeflorida.org/vfc**