

# Transporting Refrigerated Vaccines

## Short-term storage

- The procedure below for packing vaccine will keep all vaccines (except varicella containing 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-style or Styrofoam vaccine box 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 the vaccine. **Do not use dry ice.**
3. **Thermometer.** If possible, 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 or crumpled paper. Not using enough packing material can cause the vaccine to freeze.



Transport with a portable refrigerator unit is recommended

## Pack Vaccine

### 1. Cold Packs

Place a layer (at least 2 inches) of “conditioned” coolant packs in the transport container.



### 4. Packing Material

Completely cover the vaccine with another 2-inch layer of packing material.



### 2. Packing Material & Thermometer

Completely cover the cold packs with a 2-inch layer of packing material. Place a calibrated thermometer on top of the packing material.



### 5. Cold Packs

Place another layer of “conditioned” cold packs on top of the packing material. Make sure that the cold packs do not touch the boxes of vaccine.



### 3. Vaccine

Stack layers of vaccine boxes on top of the packing material with the thermometer. Ensure the boxes of vaccine DO NOT touch the cold packs.



### 6. Form & Display

Fill the cooler to the top with packing material (at least 2 inches). Place the thermometer’s digital display and the temp log on top.



Record the temperature at the time of departure. Check the temperature every hour during transport and document. 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, immediately contact the vaccine manufacturer and contact your local health department if VFC vaccine is involved. Then label the vaccine “DO NOT USE” and put it in the refrigerator.

When transporting frozen vaccine refer to “Combined Guidance for Storage, Handling & Transport of Varicella-Containing Vaccines” at: <http://www.aimtoolkit.org/vaccine-management.php>