

COVID-19 Vaccine Transportation Guidance

Vaccine efficacy and safety is critically tied not only to preparation of the vaccine, but the maintenance of the storage and handling guidance at each step of vaccine management. General guidance includes the importance of maintaining cold-chain storage and handling requirements as identified by the manufacturer. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following:

- Well trained staff
- Appropriate equipment to store the vaccine and monitor temperatures including:
 - Portable freezers, refrigerators, or containers qualified to maintain proper temperatures.
 - A digital data logger with a buffered probe to monitor temperature.
- Written policies and procedures

Additionally, transporting the vaccine creates a challenge as transporting multidose vials may not always be the most feasible or safest option. CDC does not recommend routine transportation of vaccines in non-manufacturer filled syringes. When necessary to prevent wastage or cross-contamination of the multidose vial, care should be taken to ensure vaccine efficacy including the following:

- Refer to the [CDC's temperature monitoring guidance toolkit](#)
- Ensure temperature is maintained with monitoring and transportation for all vaccines. Follow these vaccine specific best practice:
 - If vaccine brand appropriate, transport in a frozen versus refrigerated state when possible
 - Wrap and protect the vaccine to prevent shaking and agitation during transportation
 - Monitoring cumulative transport time and ensure the vaccine is utilized during while maintaining efficacy
 - Administration time based on puncture of vaccine stopper/top to ensure vaccine is utilized within 6 hours from initial access and during viability

Although CDC recommends vaccines be transported in multidose vials, there may be a few situations where transportation in a predrawn syringe is appropriate to prevent cross contamination and ensure safety. This may be appropriate in the following situations:

- When administering vaccine at a location where multidose vials could be cross contaminated due to the environment.
- When transportation of the multidose vial might cause doses to be wasted due to transportation time or use by time identified for vaccine efficacy.

If review of the vaccine plan and environment indicates that predrawn syringes are safer, follow these steps:

1. Label both the predrawn syringe(s) and transportation container (e.g. resealable plastic bag) used to hold the syringe(s) with:
 - a. Name of and dosage amount

- b. Exact beyond-use date and time
 - c. Lot number
 - d. Preparer's name or initials
2. Follow temporary storage container and temperature monitoring guidance:
- a. Moderna: Predrawn syringes can either be stored for 6 hours in the refrigerator at 2 C to 8 C (36 F to 46 F) or at ambient room temperature at 15 C to 25 C (59 F to 77 F) after the vial is initially punctured.
 - b. Pfizer-BioNTech: Predrawn syringes can be stored for 6 hours at 2 C to 25 C (36 F to 77 F) after the vaccine is mixed.
 - c. Johnson & Johnson (Janssen): After the first dose has been withdrawn, hold the vial between 2° to 8°C (36° to 46°F) for up to 6 hours or at room temperature (maximally 25°C/77°F) for up to 2 hours. Discard the vial if vaccine is not used within these times.

For additional guidance, visit the [CDC's Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit](#). For questions, contact COVID.Vaccine@doh.wa.gov.

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