



# Practice Briefs

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**Can I store vaccines in the door of our medication refrigerator?**

**NO**

Best practices for storing vaccine and diluent in a refrigerated unit include:

- **Always store vaccines in their original packaging with lids closed until ready for administration.** This protects them from light and provides additional thermal protection/stability. **Never store loose vials or manufacturer-filled syringes outside of their packaging.** This increases the risk of administration errors, exposes vaccine to light, and makes it more difficult to track expiration dates and manage inventory.
- **Place water bottles on the top shelf and floor and in the door racks.** Putting water bottles in the unit can help stabilize temperatures that can be destabilized by frequently opening and closing unit doors or a power failure. Avoid storing vaccines in areas where there is a greater risk of temperature excursions (such as the top shelf, floor, and door). Place water bottles carefully so they cannot dislodge, preventing the door from closing securely or weighing the door down so the seals are not tight. Label all water bottles, “DO NOT DRINK.”
- **Store vaccines on middle shelving inside the medication refrigerator** (not on top shelf, floor or door).

Although this is specific guidance targets storage of vaccines, these recommendations can be used for ALL medication refrigerators, especially considering that most medication refrigerators are often used (at least seasonally) for influenza vaccine storage.

CDC Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit -

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/admin/storage/toolkit/storage-handling-toolkit.pdf>.

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*ICAP is a cooperative effort of UNMC/Nebraska Medicine and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. “ICAP Practice Briefs” are intended to provide evidence-based guidance on infection prevention issues; check linked references directly for the most current and more detailed information.*