

New York State Vaccines for Children (NYS VFC) Program

Vaccine Storage Unit Guidance

Effective January 1, 2015 any NYS VFC provider purchasing new refrigerator or freezer units must purchase stand-alone storage units for the storage of public vaccine. Providers who currently use household units may continue to do so as long as those units continue to function properly. However, any new refrigerator or freezer purchased after January 1st must be a stand-alone refrigerator or freezer unit.

Research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST) has shown that stand-alone units are far better at maintaining the consistent temperatures which are required to keep vaccine viable. Ensure that your VFC vaccines are stored properly to avoid costly vaccine losses and unnecessary vaccine wastage and need for revaccination.

Look for:

Best	Good	Minimum	Not Allowed for New Purchases
Biologic, pharmaceutical, or medical grade stand-alone refrigerators Auto defrost stand-alone freezers Combination self-defrosting unit with two separate compressors, a thermostat control for each compartment, and no circulating air between the freezer and refrigerator compartments (these are uncommon)	Stand-alone freezer without auto defrost capability Stand-alone consumer refrigerator units (sometimes referred to as freezerless refrigerators)	Combination refrigerator/freezer unit with two doors and two thermostat controls, where only the refrigerator compartment is being used for vaccine storage.	Combination refrigerator/freezer units with a single thermostat control Combination refrigerator/freezer units with a single compressor and two thermostat controls with the intent to use both the refrigerator and freezer compartments for vaccine storage

Points to remember:

- Storage units should be big enough to hold the largest inventory of the year without resulting in overcrowding (e.g. back to school and flu season).
- The refrigerator must be able to consistently maintain temperatures between 35° and 46° Fahrenheit (2° to 8° Celsius).
- The freezer must be able to maintain temperatures at or below 5° Fahrenheit (-15° Celsius).
- Dormitory-style units are NEVER allowed for the storage of VFC vaccine.

For more information about purchasing a refrigerator or freezer for your VFC vaccine contact the **NYSDOH Vaccine Program:**

Phone: 1-800-KID-SHOTS (1-800-543-7468)

Email: nyvfc@health.state.ny.us

Visit: http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/immunization/vaccines_for_children.htm

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit

Visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/storage/toolkit/storage-handling-toolkit.pdf>