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| The Lordship lane surgery:Policy for vaccine storage |
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Last review 1 Aug 2020

Next review 1 Aug 2021

1. **Introduction**

Vaccine efficacy depends on maintaining the vaccine ‘cold chain’ at every stage from the manufacturer to the recipient. Vaccines are biological substances, that may lose their effectiveness quickly if they become too hot or too cold at any time, especially during transport and storage. Vaccines naturally biodegrade over time, and storage outside of the recommended temperature range – including during transport and storage – may speed up this loss of potency, which cannot be reversed. This may result in the vaccine failing to protect, as well as resulting in vaccine wastage. Inactivation of vaccines may only come to light when immunised individuals acquire the disease in question. It may then be difficult to demonstrate a clear link between this and previous inadequate storage, distribution and handling practices. Each stage in the cold chain should be the subject of careful quality control, not least in the general practice setting. High standards are necessary and are encouraged in primary care by appropriate training of staff involved with immunisation, clear designation of responsibilities to named individuals, the development and implementation of written protocols, and continuing regular audit.

**2. Purpose and scope**

This document applies to all staff employed by The Lordship lane surgery.

**3. Policy Statement**

This policy will be implemented by all Staff to ensure adherence to best practice.

**4. Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that they adhere to best practice

**5. Management of vaccines**

When ordering and taking delivery of vaccines staff are aware that:

* orders are placed every 2-4 weeks, according to need
* vaccine is promptly stored in a fridge after delivery, maintaining the ‘cold chain’ at all stages
* stock is properly rotated – the shortest expiry date used first
* orders are placed in sufficient time to ensure there is an adequate supply for clinics.

Designated staff: Yolanda Conway (practice nurse) is responsible for ordering.

Reception staff: Sandra Gage are responsible the receipt and care of vaccines.

All members of the primary care team are aware of the importance of good vaccine management.

**6. Management of fridge temperature**

Staff Observe the four Rs:  Read; Record; Reset; React

Staff members having been designated to record fridge temperatures:

* in a standard fashion and on a standard form
* act if the temperature falls outside +2 deg C and +8 deg C
* reset the thermometer after each reading.

Designated staff to record fridge temperatures on the following days:

staff who use the room on the day are responsible for checking the fridge temperature

(the practice manager deputises if any staff are away).

A log book of all fridge temperatures, usually 2-8 degrees Centigrade is kept by the fridge. Vaccines must never be frozen. Refrigerator temperatures are monitored/recorded daily using a maximum/minimum thermometer.

**7. Safe vaccine storage**

Vaccines should be placed, as appropriate, in their original packaging, in the storage refrigerator immediately on receipt. Vaccine stocks should be placed within the refrigerator so that those with shorter expiry dates are used first. Vaccines must never be used when past their expiry date. Sufficient space should be allowed in the refrigerator to allow circulation of cool air.

A record book for deliveries, recording date and time received, batch numbers and expiry dates is kept for each designated vaccine refrigerator.

Designated staff: Sandra Gage

**8. Defrosting and cleaning refrigerators**

When defrosting or cleaning the refrigerator, vaccines must be transferred to a second refrigerator. This temporary storage refrigerator must also be monitored to ensure the correct temperature (2 degrees C to 8 degrees C) is maintained.

Alternatively, Sadlers chemist can be contacted next door for temporary storage.

Designated staff: Sandra Gage

9**. Refrigerator failure or disruption of the cold chain**

In the event of the refrigerator failing or breaking down. Advice on suppliers of refrigeration equipment and accessories, such as cool boxes, is available from:

Immunisation Policy, Monitoring and Surveillance Department of Health Area 512, Wellington House, 133-155 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8UG Tel 020 7972 1227

The Practice is able to use the vaccine fridges in Sadlers chemist next door as a temporary measure.

If vaccine is exposed to temperatures outside the recommended storage range, the following procedure is suggested: In general, any vaccine that has been exposed to temperatures outside the recommended storage range should not be administered.

**10. Further useful advice can be obtained from the following websites:**

[www.dh.gov.uk/greenbook](http://www.dh.gov.uk/greenbook)

Department of Health web based version of The Green Book ‘Immunisation Against Infectious Disease’

[www.immunisation.org.uk](http://www.immunisation.org.uk/)

NHS Health Promotion England

www.who.org World Health Organisation. Lists vaccination schedules for individual countries [www.dh.gov.uk/mmr](http://www.dh.gov.uk/mmr)

Department of Health MMR website www.dh.gov.uk/bcg Department of Health BCG website [www.ukph.org](http://www.ukph.org/)

‘Starting Point’ knowledge resource for UK Public Health Professional

[www.emc.medicines.org.uk](http://www.emc.medicines.org.uk/)