



Department  
of Health

# NYS Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program

## Vaccine Storage Unit Maintenance

Regular maintenance of vaccine storage units is recommended to ensure proper operation and to maintain temperatures suitable for vaccine storage. The maintenance tasks outlined below should be performed on at least a monthly basis. The instructions that follow are intended to give general guidance on performing storage unit maintenance. Always check the manufacturer's guidance for complete instructions on how to perform maintenance on your storage unit.

### 1. Clean the inside of the storage units:

- Wipe the inside of the unit with disinfectant or antibacterial wipes and let the shelves air dry.
- Do not unplug the units while cleaning inside.
- Do not remove vaccine from the units. Move the trays as you clean and take care not to get cleaning product on the vaccine.
- Clean quickly to avoid temperature excursions.

### 2. Keep coils and motor free of dust and dirt build-up.

- Consult the storage unit product manual for information on cleaning the coils and motors.
- Move vaccine to another unit that can maintain proper temperature.
- Storage units will need to be unplugged before this task is completed.

### 3. Check the drain pan for water accumulation to prevent mold growth:

- Frost-free freezers and refrigerators have a drain pan at the bottom of the unit which holds water from melted frost during regular defrost cycles.
- Although most of the water evaporates, the pans should be cleaned periodically.

### 4. Check storage unit door seals:

- Do not unplug the unit.
- Look for gaps between the storage unit and seals or torn and/or brittle seals.
- Contact maintenance company to report problems with seals.

### 5. Monitor frost build-up:

- Storage units without automatic defrost (**not** frost-free) will need to be regularly defrosted to prevent ice build-up.  
Refer to the storage unit product manual or to the separate instructions ([NYS VFC Program Guidance for Performing a Manual Freezer Defrost](#)) for information on this procedure.

## Resources

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\), Vaccine Storage and Handling Toolkit](#)

[Immunization Action Coalition, Monthly Care of Vaccine Storage Units](#)

For questions or concerns, contact the NYS VFC Program at [nyvfc@health.ny.gov](mailto:nyvfc@health.ny.gov)