



IMMUNISATION ERRORS AND COLD CHAIN MANAGEMENT

Managing vaccine administration errors

Vaccine administration errors can occur when a vaccine is incorrectly stored, prepared or given outside the current clinical guidelines, potentially resulting in an Adverse Event Following Immunisation (AEFI). All vaccine errors are preventable.

Examples of vaccine administration errors include administering: an expired vaccine, a vaccine compromised by a cold chain breach, a diluent only component of a vaccine and a vaccine that is contraindicated for an individual or outside recommended age.

Vaccine administration errors should be reported to [SAEFVIC](#), the Victorian vaccine safety service.

In NSW, it is the responsibility of the immunisation provider to manage vaccine administration errors and seek advice from your nearest Public Health Unit if required. For more information go to [Adverse event following immunisation control guideline](#).

To provide the framework for safe practice, keep up-to-date with your knowledge of vaccines, cold chain management, national and state immunisation programs, the professional standards of your registration and relevant authority to immunise.

Review and check

- Ensure all staff receiving and storing vaccines have completed the Victorian Department of Health's eLearning [Cold Chain Management module](#).
- Read the [National Vaccine Storage Guidelines: Strive for 5](#).
- Develop a vaccine management protocol for your health service to manage cold chain requirements, including a back-up plan in the event of power outage.
- Ensure staff providing the vaccination have adequate training and current knowledge of the [state and National Immunisation Program \(NIP\) schedules](#).
- Ensure staff have access to the online [Australian Immunisation Handbook](#).
- Download the Australian Immunisation Handbook [Mobile App](#), which enables access to all content even when there is no access to the internet.
- Ensure staff are practicing within their individual scope of practice and the conditions associated with their approval to administer vaccines, including exclusion criteria and specified ages of approved client groups.
- All Victorian health professionals can access free immunisation training through the [Victorian Immunisation Learning Hub](#)
- Stay up-to-date and subscribe to the Victorian Department of Health's <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation> newsletter.
- Complete the [Melbourne Vaccine Education Centre eLearning modules](#): vaccine errors, prevention, management and open disclosure.

Six steps to prevent vaccine administration errors

1. The right person
2. The right vaccine
3. The right dose
4. The right time
5. The right route and site
6. The right documentation.

Common vaccine administration errors

- Administration of live attenuated vaccines in pregnancy
- Administration of live attenuated vaccines to a person who is immunocompromised
- Administration of vaccines compromised by cold chain breach
- Vaccines administered to the incorrect person
- Vaccines administered outside of the expiry or thaw interval
- Mixing of vaccines
- Diluent only administered
- Wrong diluent used to reconstitute vaccines
- Wrong vaccine formulation for age
- Incorrect vaccine
- Vaccines given earlier than recommended age
- Administration of an incomplete dose of vaccine
- Vaccines administered earlier or later than the recommended interval
- Vaccines administered by the incorrect route
- Incorrect administration technique.

Open disclosure

Health services must follow the requirement for open disclosure to inform the client of a vaccine error. The Australian Open Disclosure Framework developed by the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care outlines the key principles of open disclosure. For more information go to [Open Disclosure Framework](#)

Vaccine errors in Victoria can be reported via the [SAEFVIC](#) website 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In NSW, follow the [Cold chain breach protocol](#) by NSW Health.

Cold chain breaches

Immunisation providers must report all cold chain breaches for all government funded vaccines that have been exposed to temperatures outside the recommended range of +2C to +8C. This excludes fluctuations up to +12C lasting no longer than 15 minutes when restocking, cleaning the fridge or stock taking.

For continued access to government funded vaccines – all government vaccine account holders are required to nominate a Vaccine Coordinator and back-up person to complete the department's [Clinical/Vaccine Coordinator Cold Chain Management eLearning Module](#) and upload their certificate of completion to the department's [Cold Chain certificate collection portal](#).

All other staff involved in cold chain management (including receipt of deliveries) are strongly encouraged to complete the [Cold Chain Management eLearning Module](#) relevant to their role.

NSW has developed [Vaccine storage and cold chain management](#) toolkit.

Transporting, storing and handling COVID-19 vaccines

Most COVID-19 vaccines are currently presented as multi-dose vials and require special handling to maintain viability and sterility. For additional information on multidose vials see [Administration of Vaccines](#) and [ATAGI guidance on the use of multi-dose vials for COVID-19 vaccination](#).

More information can also be found here: [Transporting, storing and handling vaccines | COVID-19 | The Australian Immunisation Handbook](#)

Resources

- [Immunisation programs NSW](#)
- [Immunisation | health.vic.gov.au Victoria](#)
- [Commonwealth Resources](#)
- [National Vaccine Storage Guidelines 'Strive for 5' | Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care](#)
- [The Australian Immunisation Handbook](#)

Contact

If you require more support, email primarycareresponse@murrayphn.org.au

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