

Supporting Care Homes

FRIDGE STORAGE AND TEMPERATURE MONITORING

GUIDANCE SHEET

Some medicines must be stored in a refrigerator because at room temperature they break down or may be less effective e.g. insulin. You can check this information by referring to the packaging or the Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) supplied. If you need a copy of a PIL, contact your pharmacist or go to: www.medicines.org.uk/emc/

Fridge requirements:

- There should be a separate, secure, lockable fridge that is only used for medicines.
- Do not store food or biological samples in your medicines fridge.
- In a small home a separate fridge may not be necessary. In this case a sealed container, preferably locked, may be kept in the food fridge to store the medication. Ensure food hygiene is maintained.
- The fridge must be serviced at least once a year. The maintenance contract must also include temperature gauge calibration and portable appliance testing.
- To avoid accidentally interrupting the electricity supply, use a switchless socket. Or, clearly label the plug with a cautionary notice, for example: "Do not unplug/switch off".
- Avoid keeping large amounts of medicines in the fridge as this can lead to inadequate air flow and potential freezing.
- The fridge should be regularly cleaned and defrosted and dated records kept.
- Ensure fridge contents are regularly date checked and stock rotated. Fridges can easily be overlooked when conducting regular stock audits.

Daily temperature recording:

- The fridge temperature must be kept between the range of 2°C and 8°C.
- Make sure your staff understand how to read and reset the thermometer and why this is necessary.
- You should record minimum, maximum and current temperatures, using a minimum/maximum thermometer (see example record chart over the page).
- After taking the reading the thermometer must be reset.
- Take care that the thermometer probe cable does not interfere with the door seal. This could cause the temperature to fall outside the recommended temperature range.

What to do when the fridge temperature is out of range:

- Inform the care home manager immediately.
- Segregate fridge stock while advice is sought.
- Estimate how many hours the fridge has been out of range – consider this could be due to date/stock checking, cleaning/defrosting. Check with staff working that day to confirm.
- Contact your regular pharmacy for advice or the manufacturer for individual product advice.
- Ensure that the stock which is no longer usable is disposed of promptly.
- If necessary, call out an engineer to repair the fridge.
- Contact the GP to order replacement prescriptions if required.
- Remember to record the action taken on the fridge temperature record sheet/incident form.

Please visit our website for more information:
<https://www.westhampshireccg.nhs.uk/medicines-in-care-homes>

Issue date: May 2019
Review date: May 2021

With special thanks to NHS Northern, Eastern and Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group NHS South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group for sharing this resource

Quality services, better health



