

Procedure for defrosting stand-alone manual defrost freezers

It is normal for ice and frost to accumulate inside the freezer (and even in some types of refrigerators). A thin layer of frost does not affect cooling performance, but a thick layer will affect a unit's ability to efficiently maintain temperatures and will eventually cause failure. If your stand-alone freezer is manual defrost, defrost it regularly to maintain temperature stability. When frost has accumulated to a thickness of approximately 1 cm, the unit should be defrosted. If defrosting is necessary every month or more frequently, check door seals or call a technician for necessary maintenance. A frost-free unit with an automatic defrost cycle may be preferred if regular manual defrosting cannot be assured.

What to do with vaccines during the freezer defrost?

Option 1

- Administer all freezer vaccine (Varicella and ProQuad) until you have zero inventory. Recall patients that need freezer vaccine to administer as many as possible. MMR can be placed in the refrigerator during defrosting and returned to the freezer once it is in range and frost-free. Then follow the suggested defrosting procedure below. Once completed place an order in VIMS to receive more freezer vaccine. It is acceptable in this instance to go off your ordering schedule.

Option 2

- Have another storage unit that maintains appropriate freezer temperatures for temporary vaccine storage while defrosting on site. Monitor the temperature on the backup freezer for 3 consecutive days prior to the move, to ensure that it can maintain -15 Celsius or colder. Move the vaccine to the backup freezer and follow the suggested defrosting procedure below.

Option 3

- In a rare case, frozen vaccine can be transferred to another provider with prior approval of the Immunization Program. This is a one-way transfer (vaccine will not be transferred back). Once defrosting is complete, the provider can order more vaccine in VIMS. It is acceptable in this instance to go off your ordering schedule.

IMMUNIZATION MANUAL

FREEZER DEFROSTING PROCEDURE

