



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM

PLEASE COPY THIS FOR ALL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

IN YOUR PRACTICE

TO: All Users of State Supplied Vaccine
FROM: Mick Bolduc-Vaccines For Children (VFC) Coordinator^{MB}
DATE: June 8, 2011
SUBJECT: Varicella Vaccine Shipments from Merck

The primary purpose of this communication is to inform you of a change in the shipping of varicella vaccine from Merck.

Varicella Shipments

Effective June 6, 2011 Merck will no longer ship varicella vaccine using dry ice since the use of dry ice may subject the vaccine to temperatures colder than recommended. Varicella shipments will now be shipped with 6 frozen gel packs that are specifically designed to maintain proper temperature for 3 days from the shipment date located on the packing slip. If your varicella vaccine is received after the 3 day shipping period, **please call the Immunization Program immediately so we can contact the Merck Order Management Center to facilitate a replacement shipment.**

As a reminder varicella vaccine must be stored frozen between -58 degrees Fahrenheit and +5 degrees Fahrenheit (-50 Celsius to -15 Celsius). Diluent for the vaccine is located in the top compartment of the shipping box underneath the cardboard cap and should be stored either in the refrigerator or at room temperature. Merck will be including the attached storage instructions with this month's varicella shipments.

As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Immunization Program at (860) 509-7929.



IMPORTANT STORAGE INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT VARIVAX® (VARICELLA Virus Vaccine Live)

The receiver must immediately open the container and store the vaccine in a freezer.

Store frozen at an average temperature of -15°C (+5°F) or colder prior to reconstitution for injection.

VARIVAX® is packed with frozen gel packs in the shipping container. The quantity of frozen gel packs placed in the container is based on carefully determined guidelines. These Merck guidelines take into account the maximum temperature to which the container will be exposed, the time in transit and the need to keep the vaccine at the appropriate temperature during shipping.

Adequate refrigerant (frozen gel packs) was placed in this shipping container to maintain proper temperatures for THREE DAYS from the shipment date located on the packing list.

If the container is received after the time period described above, contact the Merck Order Management Center immediately for replacement instructions at 1-800-MERCK RX (1-800-637-2579). Such Requests for replacement must be received by Merck within 10 days of the original shipment.

- The vaccine is located in the lower compartment – **Store the vaccine in the FREEZER immediately.**
Any freezer (e.g. chest, frost-free) units that reliably maintain an average temperature of **-15°C (+5°F)** or colder and have separate sealed freezer doors are acceptable.

Store the diluent (located in the top compartment underneath the cardboard cap) in a refrigerator (2°C to 8°C [36°F to 46°F]) or at room temperature (20°C to 25°C [68°F to 77°F]).