

# Guidance for Vaccine Storage and Handling during COVID-19

## Update to York Region health care providers as of April 30, 2020

On April 27, 2020, the Ministry of Health issued a communication to public health units regarding vaccine wastage during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During this time, health care providers should:

- Maintain vaccine wastage at your premises.
- Remove vaccine wastage from the fridge and keep them separate from useable vaccines.
- Clearly label vaccine wastage as “Wastage – Do not use”.
- Do not return vaccine wastage to York Region Public Health until further notice.

### Vaccine Storage and Handling Guidance during COVID-19

In addition to guidance on vaccine wastage, the Ministry also provided some guidance on vaccine storage and handling during the COVID-19 pandemic. This guidance was shared with York Region health care providers on April 24, 2020, but we are sharing it again for ease of reference. Normal Vaccine Storage and Handling Protocols should continue to be followed:

- Even if you have limited your office hours, continue to monitor and record minimum, maximum, and current fridge temperatures twice daily, as you normally would when open normal hours.
- Indicate any office closures in your temperature log book.
- To minimize vaccine wastage due to cold chain failure or product expiry, minimize your vaccine stock where possible. When ordering vaccines, consider any reduction in office hours and the patients you are seeing during COVID-19.
- As normal, report all cold chain incidents to public health as soon as they are discovered. Maintain the exposed vaccines in the refrigerator on hold and clearly indicate that the vaccines cannot be used until assessed by public health.
- At this time, York Region Public Health’s Registered Pharmacy Technicians are not conducting Storage and Handling Maintenance Inspections of fridges that store publicly-funded vaccines. Once COVID-19 measures are lifted, we will be in touch to book your annual fridge inspection.
- At this time, York Region Public Health is conducting fridge inspections for new premises, new fridges, and replacement fridges only.

Please visit [york.ca/vaccineinventory](https://york.ca/vaccineinventory) for information on vaccine storage and handling protocols.

### Questions?

Call our Vaccine Inventory program at **1-877-464-9675 ext. 74033** (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday).

