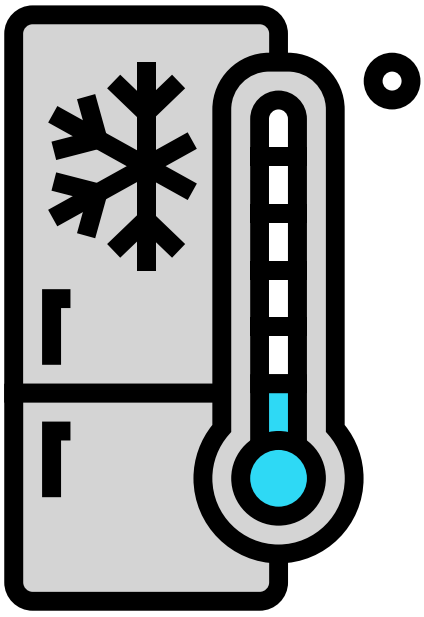
ABSOLUTE SCOOP

DID YOU KNOW?

Your medication refrigerator should be kept at 36 to 46 degrees Fahrenheit. It is important to keep your temperature log up to date, and remember to take action if a temperature is out of range!



KEEPING IT COOL: REFRIGERATED MEDICATIONS

Written by Amanda Mattingly, R.Ph., BCGP, BCMTMS, Consultant Pharmacist

Approximately 5 to 10% of pharmaceutical products require refrigeration to help maintain their efficacy, sterility, or physical form. Medications and vaccines that require refrigeration should be stored at temperatures between **2˚C to 8˚C (36˚F to 46˚F).** Failing to store these medications within their required temperature range can have many consequences, including loss of efficacy and stability. Some refrigerated medications cost hundreds or thousands of dollars, and improper storage could cause significant financial loss. Common medications that are stored in the refrigerator may include insulins, vaccines, biologics, antibiotics, suppositories, and more.

Survey Implications

F0761 is a commonly cited CMS tag for drug labeling and storage compliance. The facility must store all drugs and biologicals in accordance with currently acceptable professional principles and include the appropriate accessory, cautionary instructions, and expiration date when applicable. In accordance with state and federal law, the facility must store all drugs and biologicals in locked compartments under proper temperature controls and permit only authorized personnel to have access to the keys.

Temperature Monitoring: Each refrigerator used for medication storage should have either a temperature log, or a temperature monitoring system.

1. Temperature logs: Fridge temperatures are to be recorded daily at a minimum, and twice daily when vaccines are present. Monitoring should include date and time of observation, temperature recorded, and full name or initials of individual performing the check.
2. Automated temperature monitoring: A temperature monitoring system capable of detecting and alerting staff of a temperature excursion (Example: Sonicu). Facility must maintain report that contains date and time of temperature observations, temperature recorded, and any excursions.

Temperature Excursions: Any temperature reading outside ranges recommended in the manufacturers' package inserts is considered a temperature excursion. Identify temperature excursions quickly and **take immediate action** to correct them. Corrective measures must be documented if fridge temps are out of range. Temps that are too high or too low may require action, such as checking with the drug manufacturer to find out if a medication should be discarded. You may contact the pharmacy if there is concern for drug integrity due to temperature excursions.

Preventing temperature excursions

- Don't crowd medications in the refrigerator. Allow air circulation between items.
- Store products in the middle of the refrigerator, on the shelves, not in refrigerator drawers or door compartments.
- Make sure the thermometer's sensing probe is placed in the center of the refrigerator, away from the floor, coils, walls, ceiling, and vents.
- Ensure your refrigerator has a tight seal and that your freezer does not have frost build-up. Freezer needs to remain ice-free/defrosted.

ABSOLUTE PHARMACY

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Food and Drink

No food or beverages should be stored in refrigerators used to store medications. This includes supplements and items that may be used to administer medications (i.e. pudding or applesauce).

Cleaning

Refrigerators should be kept in clean and orderly condition, free from spills. Stick to a cleaning schedule to ensure your fridge stays clean and sanitary.

Controlled Medications

Refrigerated controlled drugs must be stored in a permanently affixed and separately locked compartment. Refrigerated controls must be counted each shift. (Examples: lorazepam injectable, lorazepam intensol, dronabinol)

Medication Dating

Remember to date multi-dose medications upon opening. The beyond-use date for an opened multiple-dose vial is 28 days, unless otherwise specified by the manufacturer. All expired medications should be removed from active stock.

Common Refrigerated Product Expiration Dates:

- Tubersol (TB testing solution): 30 days after opening
- Ativan Intensol: 90 days after opening and must be kept under refrigeration (may differ based on manufacturer)
- Latanoprost eye drops: 6 weeks after removal from the fridge
- Acetylcysteine vials: Store unopened vials at room temperature. Once opened, store under refrigeration and use within 96 hours.
- Probiotics: Some probiotic products require refrigeration (check your label).
- Insulins: Unopened vials and pens must be stored in refrigerator. Each type of insulin may have a different length of time before it expires, based on manufacture recommendations.

Check out our Expirations for Common Therapies reference for insulins and other refrigerated products with beyond use dates.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

About the Author



Outside of work Amanda enjoys cooking, playing tennis, and working on house projects.

Amanda has been a consultant pharmacist for over 17 years and joined Absolute Pharmacy in 2022. Since then, she has made a tremendous impact on our clinical services. She enjoys helping solve medication-related challenges for the senior population. A graduate of Ohio Northern University, Amanda lives with her husband, Josh, their 12-year-old twins, Reese and Lincoln, and their 2 dogs.

What kind of music did the Pilgrims listen to?

Plymouth Rock!



What do you call a turkey the day after thanksiving?

Lucky!

ABSOLUTE PHARMACY