

Kent and Medway CCG

Medication Storage and Temperature Monitoring

Best Practice Guidance

NICE Medication Storage requirements

Care home providers should have robust processes in place to effectively store medicines and monitor temperatures of storage facilities. Such storage facilities should be appropriate to meet the needs of the residents and the medicines used by residents. At every point in the cold chain, precautions should be taken to minimise the effect of adverse external conditions on the quality and stability of that product.

In most care homes, there should be a separate, secure fridge that is only used for medicines that require cold storage. In small homes that do not have a constant need to refrigerate medicines, a separate fridge may not be necessary. In this case a sealed container, preferably locked, may be kept in the food fridge to store medicine e.g. an occasional bottle of oral antibiotics or eye drops. A domestic fridge is not suitable for storing high risk products such as vaccines, insulins or blood products. Please check with the dispensing pharmacy for further advice on specific products.

Key points for storage

- Medications under the responsibility of the care home must be stored in a designated locked room, medication trolley or cupboard. Access to these areas should be via keys or key code.
- Access to where medication is stored must be restricted to authorised members of staff only.
- See self-administration best practice guidance for guidance on how self-administered medications should be stored.
- Medication must be stored following the manufacturers recommendation.
- Medication must be stored in the original container it was supplied in by the pharmacy.
- Each individual resident's medication should be grouped together within the medication storage area so that it is easily identifiable and the risk of medications being administered to another individual is reduced. E.g using clearly labelled baskets for each resident's medication.
- External medications should be stored separately. This can be in the residents room an appropriately locked place is available.

How to check where a medication should be stored?

The packaging and/or Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) that is supplied with a medicine will state whether the medicines needs to be kept in a fridge or at room temperature. If you need a copy of the PIL contact your supplying pharmacy or go to www.medicines.org.uk/emc

Key points for fridge storage

- The fridge must be locked. Accessible to only authorised members of staff.
- The fridge is for the storage of medications only.
- The fridge is in a well ventilated area, away from any heat sources.
- To prevent the fridge being switched off use a switchless socket or put a clear notice on the plug to say 'Do not unplug or switch off'
- The fridge must be serviced once a year. Documentation of service and calibration certificates should be kept for future reference.
- The maintenance contract must include temperature gauge calibration and portable appliance testing.
- The fridge is regularly cleaned and defrosted.
- Temperature is monitored at least once a day, and recorded including the minimum and maximum temperatures.
- Staff should be aware of the usual range of temperatures for the refrigeration and room storage, how to take accurate readings and the steps to follow should the temperature be out of range.

How to monitor Fridge Temperatures?

Fridge temperature should be between +2°C and +8°C.

The temperature of a refrigerator storing medication should be monitored daily when it is in use, and recorded (*See Appendix 1 for Fridge Temperature Monitoring Sheet*). A maximum/minimum thermometer is recommended for this. Follow the manufacturers guide for how to take minimum, maximum and current temperature readings and how to reset the thermostat. Ensure all staff required to carry out this task are competent to do so.

The medication fridge should be regularly cleaned and defrosted.

What to do if a Fridge Temperature is out of range?

If the fridge isn't functioning as expected, it is important to identify the fault quickly, otherwise medicines may be wasted. The care provider should have a written procedure of action to take if the temperature is outside +2°C and +8°C (*See Appendix 3 for an Out of Range Fridge Temperature monitoring sheet*). In the event of an out of range temperature, a care home should consider:

- Establishing the time period that the fridge temperature has been out of range for.
- Contacting the dispensing pharmacy for further advice specific to medicines kept in fridge.
- Introducing measures to rectify this situation e.g. defrosting the fridge.
- Monitoring the fridge temperature closely until temperature control has been restored.
- To ensure the cold chain, it may be necessary to remove refrigerated medication to a secondary fridge until temperature control has been restored in the medication fridge. If this is undertaken, a thermometer must be placed in the secondary fridge with the medication.
- Disposing of medication ONLY upon the advice of the dispensing pharmacist.

How to monitor Room Temperatures?

Room temperature should be between +15°C and +25°C.

The temperature of the room(s) where medication is stored should be monitored and recorded daily (*See Appendix 2 for Room Temperature Monitoring Sheet*).

What to do if a Room Temperature is out of range?

The care provider should have a written procedure of action to take if the temperature is outside +15°C and +25°C. In the event of an out of range temperature, a care home should consider:

- Establishing the time period that the room temperature has been out of range for.
- Contacting the dispensing pharmacy for further advice.
- Introducing measures to rectify this situation e.g. open windows where appropriate.
- Monitoring the room temperature closely until temperature control has been restored.
- Disposing of medication ONLY upon the advice of the dispensing pharmacist.

What should be stored separately from regular medication?

- **Controlled drugs** – must be stored in a cupboard made of metal which is secured to a wall by bolts that cannot be accessed from the outside the cupboard and fitted with a robust lock. See controlled drugs best practice for further guidance.
- **Nutritional supplements, thickening agents, dressings and appliances** – must be stored securely and accessible to the appropriate persons within the home. A risk assessment may be carried out as some items may be stored in areas other than the clinical room.

- **Homely remedies** – must be stored in a locked medication cupboard separated from named medications. For example if a separate cupboard is unavailable then they may be stored in basket clearly labelled 'homely remedies'
- **Expired medications and medications no longer required**– must be stored in a tamperproof container within a cupboard until destroyed or collected for destruction.
- **Medication belonging to deceased residents** – must be kept for a minimum of 7 days, clearly labelled not in use and separate from in use medications.

References and Acknowledgements

NICE - <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/SC1/chapter/1-Recommendations#receiving-storing-and-disposing-of-medicines>

CQC - <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/adult-social-care/storing-medicines-fridges-care-homes>

CQC - <https://www.cqc.org.uk/guidance-providers/adult-social-care/controlled-drugs-care-homes>

NHS Medway Clinical Commissioning Group

NHS East Kent Clinical Commissioning Group

NECS Medicines Optimisation - <https://medicines.necsu.nhs.uk/necs-good-practice-guidance-and-tools-for-care-homes/>

Appendix 1

Fridge Temperature Monitoring

Temperatures must be between +2°C and +8°C. If outside this range please take appropriate actions. Please reset the thermometer after each recording.

Month:.....**Year:**.....

Date	Current Temperature	Min Temp	Max Temp	Thermostat Reset (tick)	Checked By	Any action taken if out of range (2-8°C), if necessary
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
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7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
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14						
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25						
26						
27						
28						
29						
30						
31						
Fridge defrosted and cleaned by:						Date Fridge defrosted and cleaned:
Fridge Temperature checked every day (Y/N):						Any necessary action taken (Y/N):
Reviewed By:						Date:

Appendix 2:

Room Temperature Monitoring

Temperatures must be between +15°C and +25°C. If outside this range please take appropriate actions.

Month:.....**Year:**.....

Date	Current temperature	Checked by	Actions taken
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
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26			
27			
28			
29			
30			
31			
Room Temperature checked every day (Y/N):			Any necessary action taken (Y/N):
Reviewed By:		Date:	

Appendix 3:

Out of Range Fridge Temperature Monitoring Sheet

Out of Range Fridge Temperature Monitoring Sheet					
Hours since last temperature check:					
Hours out of range (approximately, if known):					
Date	Current Temperature	Min Temp	Max Temp	Thermostat Reset (tick)	Checked By:
Hour 1					
Hour 2					
Hour 3					
Is the temperature still out of range? (Y/N):					
Has the community pharmacy been contacted for advice? (Y/N):					
If advice given, please detail:					
Reviewed By:			Date:		