

# Checklist for Safe Medication Practices

This tool is an excerpt from the [Infection Prevention and Control for Clinical Office Practice](#) (Appendix H) and was reformatted for ease of use. To learn more, please see Chapter 6 on medications, vaccines and skin antisepsis.

For more information please contact Public Health Ontario's Infection Prevention and Control Department at [ipac@oahpp.ca](mailto:ipac@oahpp.ca) or visit [www.publichealthontario.ca](http://www.publichealthontario.ca)

On April 10, 2015, the Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee on Infection Prevention and Control (PIDAC-IPC) updated the guidance on the use of multidose vials in [Infection Prevention and Control for Clinical Office Practice](#). This guidance was revised as a result of inquiries from health care providers from outpatient and inpatient settings to clarify when opened multidose vials should be discarded.

# Medication Room/ Area

- There are facilities for hand hygiene in the medication room/ area.
- A puncture-resistant sharps container is accessible at point-of-use.
- There is a dedicated medication/ vaccine refrigerator. Food/specimens are not stored in the medication refrigerator.
- Temperatures of refrigerators and freezers used to store vaccines are checked twice daily and recorded.
- There is an alarm on the medication/ vaccine refrigerator to warn when the temperature falls outside the recommended range.

# Medications and Vials

- Single dose vials are not reused. Leftover contents are not combined or pooled.
- A sterile syringe and needle/cannula is used when entering a vial.
- All needles and syringes are single patient use only.
- Multidose vials are not used wherever possible.

When the use of multidose vials cannot be avoided, the following requirements are followed each time these vials are used:

- Each vial is used for a single patient whenever possible and is marked with the patient's name and date of entry, and is discarded at the appropriate time. Vials not marked with the patient's name and original entry date are discarded immediately.
- The vials are accessed aseptically on a clean surface and away from dirty, used or potentially contaminated equipment.
- The diaphragms of the vials are scrubbed using friction and 70% alcohol, and are allowed to dry before inserting a new needle and a new syringe.
- A needle is not left in a vial to be attached to a new syringe.
- The vials are discarded immediately when sterility is questioned or compromised.
- Opened vials are discarded according to the manufacturer's instructions or within 28 days, whichever is shorter, unless the vials are used for a single patient (e.g., allergy shots), the manufacturer's instructions state that the vials can be used for longer than 28 days, AND all of the above requirements are followed.

# Vaccines

- There are policies and procedures for handling and storage of vaccines.
- There is a thermometer in the refrigerator.
- Temperatures of refrigerators used to store vaccines are checked twice daily and recorded.
- Vaccines are:
  - kept refrigerated at a temperature between 2°C and 8°C
  - kept frozen at a temperature of -15°C
  - protected from light if required
  - not stored in refrigerator doors
  - If refrigerator temperatures are less than 2°C or greater than 8°C, report immediately to the public health unit for assessment of vaccine potency.