



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
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Commissioner

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August 26, 2011

Dear Colleague:

Hurricane Irene is expected to reach our area this weekend. We want to remind you of the procedures to ensure the safety of your vaccine supply in the event of the loss of electricity.

Should you experience a loss of power to your vaccine storage unit, we recommend that you take the following steps:

1. Keep all refrigerators and freezers closed during the power outage. **DO NOT OPEN THE UNITS TO CHECK THE TEMPERATURE** until power is restored.
2. If possible continue to monitor temperatures of the refrigerator or freezer, but **DO NOT OPEN THE UNITS** to do this. If this is not possible, then record the temperature as soon as possible after power is restored. In addition, document the duration of the power outage. This will provide information about the maximum temperature the vaccine was exposed to and the duration of such exposure.
3. Do not discard any vaccine.
4. When power has been restored, clearly mark these vaccines and do not use them until you are able to consult with the vaccine manufacturers or the Bureau of Immunization (BOI). Continue to store the vaccines at recommended temperatures in the event that they may still be viable.
5. Call the vaccine manufacturers at their toll-free numbers for guidance about vaccine use. (GSK 888-825-5249; Merck 800-672-6372; Sanofi Pasteur 800-822-2463; Pfizer 800-438-1985; Novartis 800-244-7668; MedImmune 877-633-4411). For vaccine supplied by the BOI, you should also notify the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program at 347-396-2405.
6. If vaccine is determined to not be potent, instructions will be provided about how to return the vaccine.

Information about managing vaccine storage during power outages is also available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's web site at:

www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/poweroutage/vaccinestorage.asp

In addition, the BOI's Vaccine Management Plan provides guidance on routine vaccine storage and handling and is available at:

www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/imm-vaccine-mgmt-plan.pdf

If vaccination of a patient is deferred because of vaccine loss, use a log or other tracking system to recall your patients once replacement vaccine is available. For professional or technical questions, please call the BOI at 347-396-2400. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Christopher M. Zimmerman, MD, MPH

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