



Drugs Fridge Policy

Introduction

Medicines requiring refrigeration can be very sensitive to temperature fluctuation and therefore must be maintained between +2°C and +8°C.

This Policy outlines the controls that must be in place when storing medicines that require refrigeration, the daily responsibilities and actions that are required.

There are two drug fridges located in the IPU Treatment room. Both are switched on at all times. They are labelled Fridge 1 and Fridge 2. Only Fridge 1 will contain medications. Drug fridge 2 is to be used as the back up in case of failure of drug Fridge 1.

Minimum Refrigeration Controls

All refrigerators used for storing medicines should be of pharmaceutical grade and meet the Medicines and Health Regulatory Agency (MHRA) guidelines on 'Control and monitoring of storage and transportation temperatures of medicinal products'

The medicines refrigerator should be stored in a locked room to allow maximum security against unauthorised entry.

Refrigerators used to store medicines must be used solely for that purpose and must not be stored with food or pathological specimens. Refrigerators must have a planned preventative maintenance inspection at least annually. Refrigerators should ideally be connected to the mains via a fused spur to prevent the fridge from accidentally being switched off. At the very least the electricity socket must be clearly labelled with a 'Do Not Switch Off' sticker.

Refrigerator maximum / minimum temperatures must be monitored and recorded on a daily basis. Failure to comply with this daily monitoring will trigger the requirement for an incident form to be completed and will require the staff member (s) responsible to submit a statement regarding the reason for the lapse. If the staff member (s) triggers two or more lapses then further action will be considered under the Disciplinary Policy.

The person in charge will be expected to record the maximum / minimum temperature reached, time / date the failure occurred.

Temperature records should identify any temperature deviations and give details of corrective actions taken as a result. For instances where there has been a temperature deviation, best practice would be to take a further reading 1 hour later, to ensure that it was a transient deviation and show that the temperature was now back within prescribed parameters.

If after the second checking a failure has still occurred the drugs stored within the drug fridge should be promptly re-located to the back up drug fridge which is in the IPU Treatment room. This fridge is kept switched on at all times.

All staff should be aware that they must inform the person in charge immediately if the refrigerator fails. If within hours that will be the Senior Nurse InPatient Unit (or Deputy).

The Pharmacy Provider must be informed as soon as possible within the working day/week to establish whether the affected stock can still be used.

If advice or replacement stock is urgently required outside of normal working hours, the Senior Manager on call must be contacted in order to liaise with the Local Acute Trust Site Manager to organise contingency medication until the drugs fridge can be repaired or replaced.

The Drugs Fridge should be monitored for build-up of frost as this may be a sign that the fridge life span is coming to an end or a service is required.

Refrigerators are sited in well ventilated areas away from sources of heat with a clear airflow allowed.

Refrigerators must be cleaned weekly and records of this activity should be kept. Expiry dates of drugs in the fridge must also be checked weekly and records kept evidencing this.

Drug refrigerators must be kept locked at all times. Drug fridge keys to be kept with main drug keys which are held by a Registered Nurse.

All medicines must be stored in the manufacturer's original packaging/container. Medicines should not be transferred from one container to another or left loose. Failure to store the medicine in the original container can affect the integrity of the medicine

MEDICINES FOR USE IN AN EMERGENCY

Medicines for use in an emergency are exempt from the above storage guidelines although attention should be paid to the safe storage and security of these items.

DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

All healthcare practitioners are responsible for ensuring medicinal products are stored in accordance with the patient information leaflet, summary of product characteristics and in accordance with instructions on the label.

The patient information leaflet and/or summary of product characteristics document for UK licensed medicinal products may be found at www.emc.medicines.org.uk.

The person who receives a delivery of medicines is responsible for checking the contents of delivery against the order and signing to authorise receipt of the delivery. This person is also responsible for unpacking any refrigerated items immediately, putting them away in the medicines refrigerator and ensuring the fridge is closed correctly and locked for safety and security.

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