

AN IMMUNIZATION UPDATE FROM THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

DATE: June 8, 2011
TO: MnVFC Providers
FROM: MnVFC Program
RE: New Shipping Package for Varivax and ProQuad

Please route to:

- Clinical supervisor
- Medical director
- Clinic manager
- Clinic staff
- Pharmacy
- Vaccine staff

Merck has a new shipping package for Varivax (varicella) and ProQuad (MMRV) vaccines*. The most notable change is that dry ice will no longer be used to pack these vaccines; instead frozen gel packs will be used. The manufacturer found that severe cold from dry ice (i.e., colder than 58°F) may cause the vial stopper to contract thus threatening sterility of the vaccine.)

Included with the shipping package is a packing insert explaining the changes, you may notice the packing insert refers to "refrigerant packs" for shipping the vaccine. The MnVFC program contacted Merck and confirmed that the vaccine will be shipped using "frozen gel packs," not "refrigerant gel packs."

The new shipping package will include:

- Maximum capacity of 80 doses
- Six **frozen gel packs** (not refrigerant gel packs) surrounding the vaccine, replacing the use of dry ice to ship the vaccine
- Bubble wrapping to provide extra protection for the vaccine product
- The diluent stored in the top layer of the box
- The invoice and packing slip stored with the diluent to keep them dry

Vaccine storage requirements upon arrival:

- **Place the vaccine in the freezer** immediately
- Keep vaccine frozen at **-58°F and +5°F** (-50°C and -15°C), don't store the vaccine on dry ice

What hasn't changed?

Both Merck and the MnVFC program require that Varivax and ProQuad vaccines be shipped directly from Merck to the clinic and not be redistributed to satellite sites.

All orders shipped beginning Monday June 6, will use the new shipping package.

*This change also applies to Zostavax vaccine if your clinic orders it privately.

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