

MEMO

TO: local public health units, private healthcare providers and hospitals, Indian Health Services, pharmacies, and other immunization providers

FROM: Molly Sander, MPH
Immunization Program Manager

RE: Disposal of Expired/Wasted Vaccines

DATE: January 26, 2010

Proper disposal of expired/wasted vaccines is everyone's responsibility to protect our environment. To dispose of vaccines appropriately, you need to know if they are either hazardous waste or infectious waste or both or neither. Those that are neither are considered industrial solid waste (normal trash). During the 2009 – 2010 influenza season, unused or expired H1N1 vaccine products may not be returned to the distributor. Instead, providers are responsible for disposing of them.

Hazardous Waste:

Unused or expired vaccines are considered hazardous if they contain mercury (such as thimerosal) or cresol-based preservatives. These are most commonly found in multi-dose vials and some pre-filled syringes. Any vial that is not empty and contains vaccine with a mercury or cresol-based preservative must be managed as hazardous waste per North Dakota's Pharmaceutical Waste Guidance

(www.ndhealth.gov/wm/Publications/NorthDakotaPharmaceuticalWasteGuidance.pdf).

This includes all multi-dose vials of H1N1 vaccine and the Novartis H1N1 pre-filled syringes that contain a trace of mercury. For more information about other vaccines that contain thimerosal visit www.vaccinesafety.edu/thi-table.htm.

Hazardous waste should be kept separate and should be disposed of properly. A list of hazardous waste disposal companies can be found at www.ndhealth.gov/WM/Publications/HazardousWasteManagementCompanies.pdf. Most health systems already have policies and procedures for handling hazardous waste.

You can assume that preservative-free vaccines (most commonly single-use vials) and single-dose pre-filled syringes (excluding Novartis syringes) are non-hazardous.

Infectious waste:

You can assume that an empty vial that contained H1N1 vaccine is non-infectious. However, that vial is considered infectious waste if combined with a used sharp, such as an injection syringe, broken contaminated glass, or lancet.

H1N1 Vaccine Disposal Table (adopted from the Minnesota Department of Health):

H1N1 Waste Items	Type of Waste	Where to Dispose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empty vials • Empty syringes without needles 	Non-infectious and non-hazardous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal trash
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empty syringes with needles 	Infectious only (non-hazardous)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharps container
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-dose vials containing H1N1 vaccine • Pre-filled syringes containing Fluvion vaccine by Novartis 	Non-infectious and hazardous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazardous waste container and management.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used syringes with intact needles that still contain vaccine (unlikely to occur unless syringe malfunctions during use) 	Infectious and hazardous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazardous waste container that meets sharps-container requirements. • Management compliant with both hazardous and infectious waste requirements. • May be disposed of through a hazardous waste disposal company.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preservative-free vaccines (most commonly single-use vials and some pre-filled syringes) 	Non-hazardous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal trash

Please contact Christine Roob at 701.476.4121 or croob@nd.gov for additional information about hazardous waste disposal.

Federally Supplied Vaccines (except H1N1 influenza vaccine):

Vaccines for Children vaccine and other federally-supplied vaccines (with the exception of H1N1 influenza vaccine) should be returned when expired/wasted to McKesson. McKesson accepts the return of all publicly purchased nonviable (wasted or expired) vaccine from providers, which also includes influenza vaccine and direct-ship vaccines (varicella and shingles), and arranges for return of nonviable vaccine to McKesson Specialty Distribution at no cost to the provider.

With the June 22, 2009 implementation of the new shipping box, providers no longer return empty boxes to McKesson, and these new shipping boxes do not have pre-printed

return address labels. When nonviable product needs to be returned to McKesson, providers must contact the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) at 800.472.2180 to request a return label. The NDDoH will then contact McKesson to facilitate the request. McKesson will then send the return label to the provider via the U.S. Postal Service. Upon receipt of the return label, the provider must contact the NDDoH to schedule a pick-up of the vaccine needing to be returned. Providers may NOT contact McKesson to coordinate pick up of wasted/expired vaccine. However, if the provider has a regularly scheduled UPS pick up at their facility, the provider may hand the labeled box of wasted/expired vaccine to the UPS driver.

Providers must include a copy of the wasted/expired vaccine form in the returns box and send a copy to the NDDoH.

Providers should **never** return:

- Used syringes, with or without needles;
- Broken vials;
- Wasted products such as a syringe that was drawn up but not used;
- Multidose vial from which some doses have already been withdrawn;
- IG, HBIG, PPD; or
- Expired diluent

Please contact the NDDoH Immunization Program with any questions at 701.328.2378 or toll-free at 800.472.2180.