

What to do if the refrigerator temperature falls out of range

Refrigerator temperature out of normal range of 2°C - 8°C (e.g., due to door being left open or overloaded with stock, etc.)

Reset the thermometer and recheck after 10 minutes

Still out of range

Monitor temperature. If temperature returns to within range (2°C - 8°C), no action is required and monitor as normal

To quarantine medication:
Place in a different refrigerator (may need to be food refrigerator) but store medication in a box/bag and clearly label as 'not to be used'.

The medication refrigerator should be solely used to store medication, not food or drinks and should be cleaned once a month to prevent any contamination. This will also prevent any ice and frost build up. After cleaning, reset the thermometer to avoid a false high reading.

STEP 1

1 - Temperature falls out of range on the refrigerator thermometer → put a note/label on the refrigerator saying '**DO NOT USE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**' with the **date, time and signature**.

2 - Label all medication as '**Not to be used**' with **date, time and signature** so that it is **quarantined** and prevents anyone from using the medication until checked.

3 - Inform all care home staff and managers.

4 - Investigate to estimate when the temperature went out of range.

5 - Do not dispose of any medication until you have **informed the Medicines Optimisation team** and someone has explained the next step; some medicines such as insulin can be kept and used at room temperature for a period of time.

STEP 2

Contact the Medicines Optimisation team as soon as possible by emailing: bswicb.prescribing@nhs.net

Including:

- Name of Care Home.
- A clear list of medication, including name, strength, form, brand (if relevant) and manufacturer (for generic items).
- The estimated time and date that the temperature was out of range.
- The last temperature readings - actual, maximum, and minimum.
- The actions taken for each medication.
- How long the refrigerator has been turned off, malfunctioning, or not recording correctly.

STEP 3

Once the Medicines Optimisation team is informed, each medication will be investigated, using different resources to give the most accurate information. This might require contacting the national medicines advice team for further details.

The Medicines Optimisation team will reply by email with clear instructions on how to proceed for each medicine.

Medication room/storage – action if temperature out of range

If room temperatures are consistently above 25°C in a medication room, consider the introduction of a cooling unit (e.g., air conditioner). If this is the case in a resident's room, carry out a risk assessment and consider installing a cooling unit or storing medicines in a cooler place. If there are any concerns about the medicine's stability being affected, contact your Medicines Optimisation team for advice. Keep records of any temperature in case required by inspectors. This is to show that the problem has been checked, monitored, and addressed.