

Purpose-Built Pharmaceutical-Grade vs. Common Household Refrigerators



Is there really a difference?
The answer is YES!



What's the big difference between a purpose-built pharmaceutical-grade refrigerator and a common dorm or household style refrigerator picked up at the local big box store? The CDC gives very clear guidance in their [Vaccine Storage and Handling Tool Kit*](#) that these style units are never acceptable (pg. 8).

Do not store any vaccine in a dormitory-style or bar-style combined refrigerator/freezer unit under any circumstances.

These units have a single exterior door and an evaporator plate/cooling coil, usually located in an icemaker/freezer compartment.

These units pose a significant risk of freezing vaccines, even when used for temporary storage. (Note: Not all small storage units are dormitory or bar-style units.

Compact, purpose-built units for biologics can be used to store vaccines.)

The CDC warns, ***"Potency is reduced every time a vaccine is exposed to an improper condition. This includes overexposure to heat, cold, or light at any step in the cold chain. Once lost, potency cannot be restored."*** (pg. 4)

In addition to ensuring patient safety, use of a pharmaceutical grade refrigerator or freezer will also minimize the risk of loss for high value vaccines and ensure compliance with Federal, State, and Local regulations. Fortunately, American Biotech Supply (ABS) has the largest selection of purpose-built vaccine storage units in the industry that provide consistent temperature performance and alert the user if they are out of range, many of which are available for immediate shipment.

As stated by the CDC, ***"Vaccine storage is a shared responsibility between manufacturers, distributors, public health staff, and healthcare providers."***

Contact us today to ensure you are doing your part in providing the best possible care to patients that depend on it.

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So, what are the major design and performance differences you need to be aware of? Here are several key points to be cognizant of:

- 1 Microprocessor Controller with Digital Temperature Display:** Provides precise temperature control to meet today's standards and displays live sample-simulated temperature.
- 2 Forced Draft Circulation:** Provides required temperature uniformity and recovery after door openings by utilizing an internal fan to help with air circulation.
- 3 Temperature Alarms:** Equipped with audible and visual high & low temperature alarms.
- 4 Remote Alarm Contacts:** Provides ability to connect to central building alarm systems.
- 5 Probe Access Port:** Access port for digital data loggers or central building monitoring system temperature probes.
- 6 Superior Insulation:** Up to 50% more insulation than domestic units.
- 7 Door Locks:** Product security for high-value medications.

It is imperative to store vaccines under proper conditions and understand the ramifications for not doing so.

* <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/admin/storage/toolkit/storage-handling-toolkit.pdf>