

## 10 Tips to Better Patient Safety

Ensuring proper storage of medications protects the safety of our patients, ensure the efficacy of the medication, and prevents contamination, infection and diversion.

Below are 10 tips, as recommended by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention to help keep our patients safe:

1. Prepare medications in a clean area, separate from patient care areas.
2. Injections are prepared using aseptic technique.
3. Rubber septum is disinfected with alcohol prior to piercing, even if the lid was just removed.
4. Use a new needle and new syringe, even when obtaining additional doses for the same patient.
5. Single dose/single use are only used for one patient, even if the doses are much more than they need.
6. Multi-dose vials should not enter the immediate treatment area.
7. Multi-dose vials are dated with a "Beyond Use Date" when opened and should be discarded within 28 days (different from printed expiration date).
8. Sharps properly disposed of in puncture resistant containers.
9. Removal of sharps at the appropriate level.
10. Keep medications locked up, with particular care to the securing of narcotics.

The CDC additionally offers tips for the appropriate storage and handling of vaccines, which are very fragile:

- Cold chain failure is the a common vaccine quality issue and can lead to outbreaks of disease.
- The cooling unit should:
  - Have a Temperature Monitoring Device, preferably a digital data logger with current calibration.
  - Maintain temperatures of 2°C to 8°C for fridges and -50°C to -15°C for freezers.
- The cooling unit should not:
  - Be a dorm style fridge with a small freezer inside the fridge.
  - Be a kitchen-style unit, due to defrost cycles.