

Cold chain: principles and practice

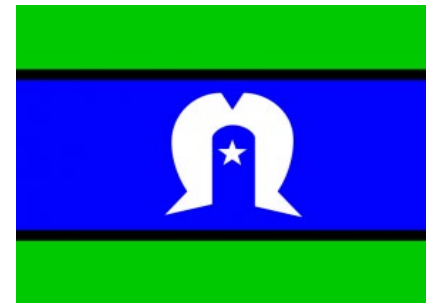
Thursday 18 September 2025

The content in this session is valid at date of presentation

Acknowledgement of Country

North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which our work takes place, The Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung People, The Boon Wurrung People and The Wathaurong People.

We pay respects to Elders past, present and emerging as well as pay respects to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the session with us today.



Housekeeping – Zoom Webinar

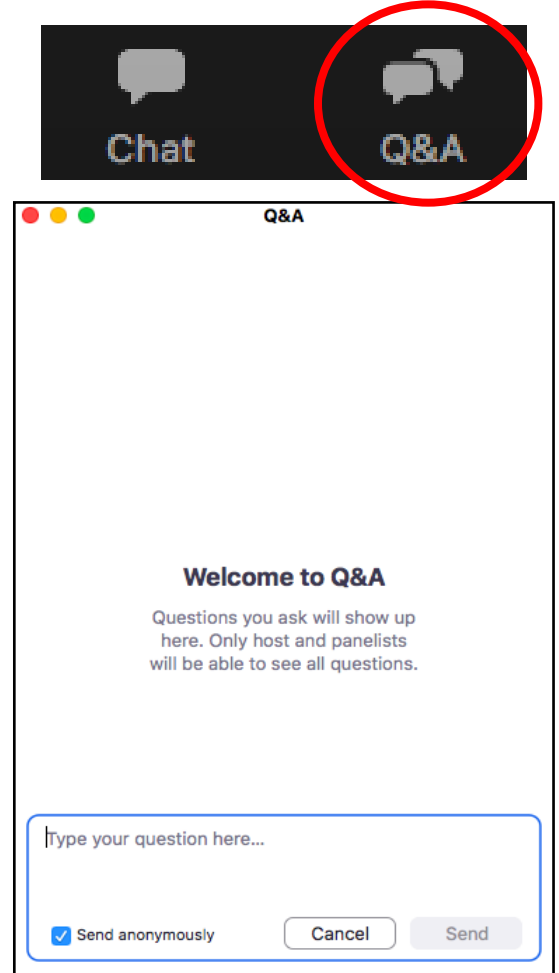
All attendees are muted

Please ask questions via the Q&A box only

Q&A will be at the end of the presentation

This session is being recorded, you will receive a link to this recording and copy of slides in post session correspondence.

Questions will be asked anonymously to protect your privacy

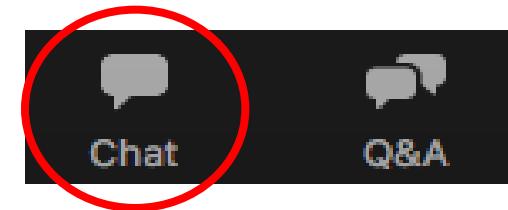
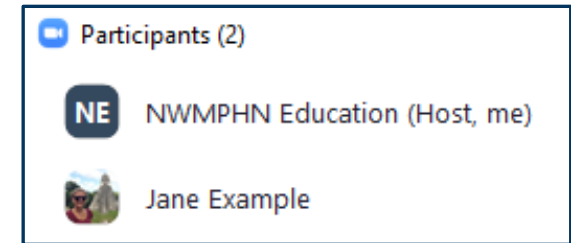


Housekeeping – Zoom Webinar

Please ensure you have joined the session using the same name as your event registration (or phone number, if you have dialled in)

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If you are not sure if your name matches, please send a Chat message to 'NWMPHN Education' to identify yourself.



Pathways are written by GP clinical editors with support from local GPs, hospital-based specialists and other subject matter experts



- **clear and concise, evidence-based medical advice**
- **Reduce variation in care**
- **how to refer to the most appropriate hospital, community health service or allied health provider.**
- **what services are available to my patients**

HealthPathways-Vaccine Storage and Cold Chain Breaches







Melbourne

Legal and Ethical

Lifestyle and Preventive Care

Immunisation

Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFIs)

Immunisation - Childhood

Immunisation - Adolescents

Immunisation - Adults

Immunisation - Influenza

Immunisation - Pregnancy

Immunisation Contacts and Services

Travel Vaccination

Vaccination Resources

Vaccines

Vaccine Storage and Cold Chain Breaches

Nutrition

Smoking and Vaping Cessation

Weight Management in Adults with Overweight or Obesity

Lifestyle and Preventive Care Referrals

Medical

Mental Health

Older Adults' Health

Medicines Information and Resources

Public Health

Specific Populations



Melbourne HEALTHPATHWAYS

Latest News

20 August
 **Health.vic**
[Health alerts and advisories](#)

20 August
 **TGA alerts**
TGA alerts:

- [Safety Alerts](#) (for health professionals)
- [Recall Actions](#) (for health professionals)
- [TGA Medicine Shortages](#) (for health professionals)

2 July
 **Victorian Government investigation of sexual assault allegations**
The Victorian Government is investigating sexual assault allegations involving a former childcare worker linked to multiple centres across Melbourne. See further information including support for concerned families and a dedicated advice line.

24 April
 **Antibiotic Guidelines Update**

Pathway Updates

Updated – 3 September
[Immunisation - Childhood](#)

Updated – 28 August
[Diabetes-related Foot Disease and Screening](#)

Updated – 20 August
[Urticaria](#)

Updated – 19 August
[Pruritus](#)

Updated – 15 August
[Oral Allergy Syndrome](#)

[VIEW MORE UPDATES...](#)

 ABOUT HEALTHPATHWAYS

 BETTER HEALTH CHANNEL

 RACGP RED BOOK

 USEFUL WEBSITES & RESOURCES

 MBS ONLINE

 NPS MEDICINEWISE

 PBS

 NHSD

About HealthPathways

[What is HealthPathways?](#)

[How do I use HealthPathways?](#)

 SEND FEEDBACK

Click 'Send Feedback' to add comments and questions about this pathway.

HealthPathways- Vaccine Storage and Cold Chain Breaches

Vaccine Storage and Cold Chain Breaches

Management

Vaccine supply ▾

Click on the drop-down to view supplementary information

Daily monitoring of your refrigerator ▾

Ongoing cold chain management ▾

What to do if you identify a cold chain breach ▾

Be prepared for a potential breach ▾

Transporting vaccines ▾

Vaccine wastage ▾

Referral

- If a cold chain breach occurs for government-funded vaccines, report the cold chain breach by completing a [cold chain breach report form](#) and emailing to immunisation@health.vic.gov.au.
- For privately purchased vaccines or other medications stored in the refrigerator, contact the manufacturer directly.
- For COVID-19 vaccines, see [COVID-19 Vaccination](#) for instructions.

Information

For health professionals ▾

Education

Department of health – Immunisation eLearning [\[link\]](#)

Further information

- Australian Department of Health, Disability and Ageing:
 - [National Vaccine Storage Guidelines Resource Collection](#) [\[link\]](#)
 - [National Vaccine Storage Guidelines: "Strive for 5"](#) [\[link\]](#)
- Victorian Department of Health:
 - [Cold Chain Breach Reporting](#) [\[link\]](#)
 - [Cold Chain Management](#) [\[link\]](#)
 - [Cold Chain Monitoring During Vaccine Transport](#) [\[link\]](#)

What to do if you identify a cold chain breach ^

A cold chain breach has occurred if:

- vaccine storage temperatures have been outside the recommended range of 2°C to 8°C. It excludes fluctuations up to +12°C, lasting ≤ 15 minutes, which may occur when stock taking or restocking refrigerators. All deviations below 2°C are considered a cold chain breach, or
- vaccine is exposed to light (if removed from packaging and exposed to direct sunlight or ultraviolet light, including fluorescent light).

When a cold chain breach incident occurs:

1. Follow the [cold chain breach reporting protocol](#) [\[link\]](#).
2. Isolate the vaccines and place a sign on the vaccine refrigerator: "Cold Chain Breach. Do not use or discard vaccines until further notice."
3. Store at 2°C to 8°C if possible.
4. Do not use or discard any vaccines until you have discussed the breach with the Victorian Department of Health Immunisation Program who can provide advice on what to do with vaccines affected.
5. Download the data logger to assess the duration of the breach and the extent of temperatures reached.
6. Assess number of vaccines affected and assess practice records to identify any vaccines exposed to a previous breach.
7. Report the cold chain breach and await advice and further instructions:
 - Complete a [cold chain breach report form](#) [\[link\]](#), attach all required documents and email to immunisation@health.vic.gov.au.
 - For privately purchased vaccines or other medications stored in the refrigerator, contact the manufacturer directly.
 - For COVID-19 vaccines, see [COVID-19 Vaccination](#) for instructions.
8. Determine the cause of the breach and, where possible, address this to reduce the risk of the event recurring.
9. Take steps to minimise risk of further cold chain breaches. See [National Vaccine Storage Guidelines – Strive for 5](#) [\[link\]](#).

Be prepared for a potential breach ^

- Have written procedures to follow in the event of a [cold chain breach](#) [\[link\]](#) or [power failure](#) [\[link\]](#).
- Have a cooler and cold bricks always available. Store ice bricks in a domestic freezer.
- Do not transfer vaccines to a cooler unless you know how to pack a cooler correctly and have a maximum minimum thermometer to record the temperature of vaccines in the cooler. Freezing is the most common reason for vaccine damage and loss in Australia. See recommendations on [coolers and how to pack a cooler](#) [\[link\]](#).
- Consider access to a pharmacy or a vaccination provider who can store your vaccines in a monitored purpose-built refrigerator.
- If your practice receives notice of a planned power outage, or you experience frequent power interruptions, consider calling the power service provider and requesting a power generator as a backup power source.
- If you have had, or are having a power outage, you can check with the power service provider for the estimated length of the outage.

HealthPathways- Vaccine Storage and Cold Chain Breaches

Relevant Pathways

[Vaccine Storage and Cold Chain Breaches](#)

[Adverse Events Following Immunisation \(AEFIs\)](#)

[Blood/Body Fluid Exposure](#)

[Hand Hygiene](#)

[Immunisation Services](#)

[Infection Prevention and Control](#)

[Local Public Health Units \(LPHUs\)](#)

[Notifiable Conditions in Victoria](#)

[Practice Management Resources](#)

[Respiratory Infectious Diseases Practice Management](#)

Related Pathways

[Assessing Respiratory Presentations in General Practice](#)

[COVID-19 Assessment and Management](#)

[Infectious Disease Management in Aged Residential Care](#)

[Infectious Diseases](#)

[Influenza](#)

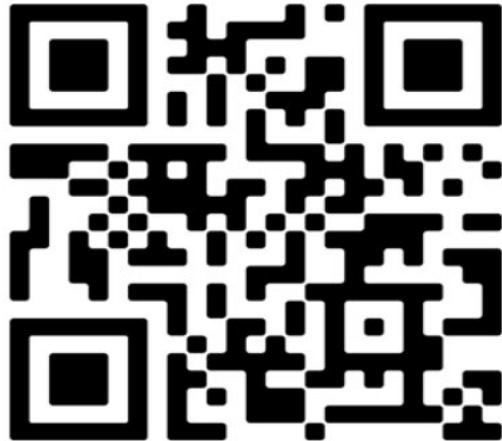
[Mosquito-borne Diseases in Victoria](#)

[Travel Vaccination](#)

Accessing HealthPathways

Please click on the **Sign in or register** button to create your individual account or scan the QR code below.

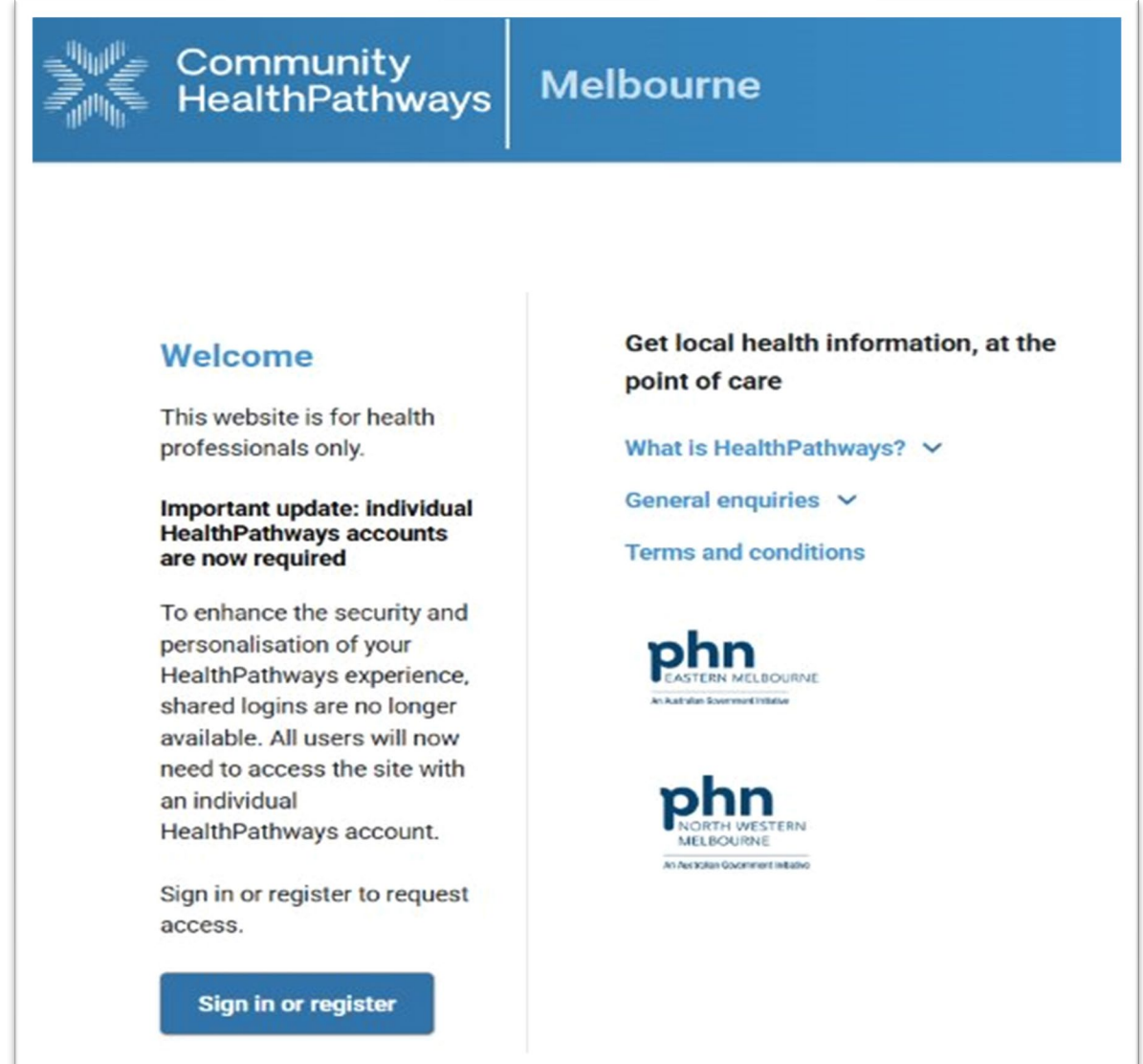
If you have any questions, please email the team
info@healthpathwaysmelbourne.org.au



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✉ or email info@healthpathwaysmelbourne.org.au

A screenshot of the HealthPathways Melbourne website. The header is blue with the "Community HealthPathways Melbourne" logo and name. The main content area is white. On the left, there is a "Welcome" section with a message for health professionals only, an "Important update" about individual accounts, and a "Sign in or register" button. On the right, there is a "Get local health information, at the point of care" section with links for "What is HealthPathways?", "General enquiries", and "Terms and conditions". At the bottom right, there are logos for "phn EASTERN MELBOURNE" and "phn NORTH WESTERN MELBOURNE".

Community HealthPathways Melbourne

Welcome

This website is for health professionals only.

Important update: Individual HealthPathways accounts are now required

To enhance the security and personalisation of your HealthPathways experience, shared logins are no longer available. All users will now need to access the site with an individual HealthPathways account.

Sign in or register to request access.

Sign in or register

Get local health information, at the point of care

[What is HealthPathways?](#) ▼

[General enquiries](#) ▼

[Terms and conditions](#)

phn
EASTERN MELBOURNE
An Australian Government initiative

phn
NORTH WESTERN MELBOURNE
An Australian Government initiative

Speakers

Deborah Kertz, Registered Nurse APNA

Deb is a highly experienced Registered Nurse and Diabetes Educator with over 30 years of service across both public and private health sectors. Currently serving as a Nurse Education Officer at the Australian Primary Healthcare Nurses Association (APNA), she brings a wealth of knowledge in acute care and over 12 years of dedicated experience in primary healthcare within general practice. She holds qualifications in Diabetes Education and Management and Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. With a strong focus on Chronic Condition Management, Deb is passionate about empowering nurses through education to deliver high-quality, patient-centred care and improve health outcomes in the community

Session Conclusion

We value your feedback, let us know your thoughts.

Scan this QR code



You will receive a post session email within a week which will include slides and resources discussed during this session.

Attendance certificate will be received within 4-6 weeks.

RACGP CPD hours will be uploaded within 30 days.

To attend further education sessions, visit,

<https://nwmphn.org.au/resources-events/events/>

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