

Use of Cold Packs during Dispensing of Blood

[*Also refer to: *Pneumatic Tube System: Use of Cold Packs and Safe-T-Vue® Temperature Indicators.*]

1. Maintain the temperature of the blood during dispensing. Dispensing typically requires a minimum of 3 minutes. Placing a blood bag product on a cold pack will help maintain temperature of the blood closer to blood refrigerator temperature. Dispensing multiple units at room temperature without temperature maintenance can easily raise the blood temperature to near or above the upper limit of 6°C for storage, especially when the blood refrigerator is maintained at 4 to 5°C.
2. Cold packs are easy to use and can be sized for the blood bag used. Storage of cold packs in the blood refrigerator for convenience permits removal of a cold pack with the unit(s) of blood and assures that the cold pack is the same temperature as the blood
3. Size of cold pack can vary depending on bag size and use. Typically, for a 350 cc bag an 18 to 21 ounce cold pack works well in the blood bank during dispensing and for container transport.
4. Transport of blood requires a not-to-exceed 10°C upper temperature. The closer blood is to refrigerator temperature when it is packed for transport, the probability of its receipt below 10°C is increased. Keeping a cold pack in contact with the blood bag is one way to help counteract the warming effect of room temperature. [*Ref: *ARC JOB AID – Packing RBCs and Whole Blood*]
5. The new lower temperature of 6°C for temporary storage is challenging to maintain once blood is removed from the blood refrigerator. Setting blood refrigerators at 3 to 4°C and using cold packs in the manner described above will help keep blood below 6°C when removed from refrigeration. [*Ref: *21 CFR 610.15 and Storage versus Transport FDA Interpretation 2005 AABB Conf.*]
6. Importance of packing blood in a transport container is a critical element of temperature control. The single most important step in the packing procedure is assuring the topmost layer is wet ice (not in direct contact with blood) or a cold pack to keep warm air from making contact with blood bags. The second critical element is to be certain the shipping container is completely filled so that outside air is nearly eliminated. [*Ref: *ARC JOB AID – Packing RBCs and Whole Blood*]
7. Safe-T-Vue Nonreversible Temperature Indicators provide assurance that blood is transported and stored within compliance temperatures. *Refer to Product Inserts and Instructional Videos for detailed use at www.williamlabs.com.

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*All references may be found at www.williamlabs.com in the References/Documents section.
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[Use of Cold Packs during Dispensing of Blood; Feb. 27, 2008; Rev 0](#)
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