

When in Doubt, Throw It Out!



Outbreaks of bloodborne infections have been associated with the reuse of single-dose vials or misuse of multiple dose vials. As a team leader or a team member, it is important to make sure that every health worker uses single-dose vials only one time for one patient. If a healthcare provider uses the single dose vial more than once, the risks of infection are extremely high.

CDC recommends the following injection safety practices:

- When you administer an injection, carefully check the label of the vial. If it says single-dose and has already been accessed, throw it away.
- A medication vial should be discarded according to the manufacturer's expiration date. When you are in doubt, it is better to throw it out.
- Cleanse the access diaphragms of medication vials using friction, with 70% alcohol, and allow the alcohol to dry before inserting a device into the vial.
- Remember, the manufacturer guarantees the only sterility of medication in the vial; this but does not include the outside of the container. Clean the tops of vials with alcohol even when they have lids or caps.
- If multi-dose vials must be used for more than one patient, they should not be stored or accessed in patient treatment rooms or operating rooms. This is to prevent inadvertent contamination of the vial through direct or indirect contact with potentially contaminated surfaces or equipment that could then lead to infections in subsequent patients.
- If a multi-dose vial enters the immediate patient treatment area, it should be dedicated to that patient only and discarded after use.

- To prevent unnecessary waste or the temptation to use contents from single-dose or single-use vials for more than one patient, healthcare personnel should select the smallest vial necessary for their needs when making purchasing decisions.

This video produced by the Center of Disease Control and Prevention includes more information about safe injection practices. [Click here](#) to watch the video.