



This wireless device being used at The Scarborough Hospital is preventing medications and vaccines from spoiling.

Wireless devices preventing vaccines from spoiling

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More hospitals, pharmacies, and doctor's offices are using wireless devices to prevent medications and vaccines from spoiling.

The Scarborough Hospital is one facility that has purchased the \$300 gadgets to help monitor the temperature in fridges and storage areas where the medicine is

stored.

"If the vaccines are not being stored at the proper temperature, you need to discard them, you can't use them," said Patricia MacGregor, the hospital's pharmacy director.

Improper storage conditions can also cause the medications to lose their potency.

She said medicines are often kept in small fridges, right next to staff lunches.

Last year the hospital purchased wireless monitors for all storage areas. An audit showed 40 per cent of the facility's fridges and storage areas were not keeping medications at proper temperatures.

MacGregor said one hospital refrigerator can hold \$20,000 worth of medication.

Health officials say vaccines and medicine sometimes are thrown out because of power outages. Sometimes it's human error, such as leaving a fridge door open or a cleaner who unplugs a fridge temporarily and forgets to plug it back in.

The Scarborough Hospital's "environment data exchange" system feeds temperature numbers every five minutes to an Internet data centre. The centre sends immediate alerts to hospital staff if something is wrong.

Most health centres use thermometers in their fridges, and public health departments do regular checks to ensure vaccines are being properly stored.

With a report from CTV Toronto's Paul Bliss



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