

Medicine storage and high room temperatures

Medicines are stored under conditions that assure their quality until they are used or administered including during transportation. For most medicines that should be stored at room temperature, this is generally understood to be not above 25 degrees Celsius. With temperatures increasing, many will be wondering how to keep room temperatures down.

Be vigilant - When administering medicines, be sure to check carefully for any signs of deterioration. If any signs are found, seek advice from a pharmacist or the product's manufacturers for specific advice.

Do what you can to lower the temperature -Whilst the medicines can often be stored safely for short periods in higher temperatures than the ideal 25 degrees Celsius or less, staff should still do their best to reduce the temperature of rooms where medicines are stored including:

- Close window fittings, particularly if windows are sun facing and consider shading windows from direct sunlight
- Open windows when the outside temperature is cooler than indoors
- Switch electrical equipment to standby or off completely if not required. Turn off non-essential equipment at night (DO NOT switch off any fridges)
- Check that the site heating is not still running (still happens due to central facilities & estates controls)
- Ensure thermometers are placed in all medicine storage areas
- Please be mindful that cooling fans to support staff/patient comfort circulate warm air and do not lower the environment temperature to support storage of medicines.
- Consider portable air conditioning units

Where high temperatures occur, keep monitoring medicines storage room temperatures, including the daily maximum and minimum temperatures and **reset the thermometer every day**. Staff reading the temperature must be trained to ensure correct readings are recorded and that they understand how to reset thermometers where relevant. Where staff reading the temperature find that it is outside the accepted range, they are aware of the actions to be taken to report and address this.

Remember other storage issues- it is still important to focus on the other important factors when storing your medicines such as:

- Their expiry date
- Storing the medicines safely and securely e.g. locked cupboard with good key security
- The correct storage environment e.g. in the fridge if appropriate.

What to do if you suspect the room temperature has exceeded the recommended storage temperature

A risk management approach is needed, medicines should be moved to a cooler area and quarantined. Seek advice from the medicine's manufacturers and/or the South West Medicines Information team (Tel: 0300 770 8564 email: asksps.nhs@sps.direct)

Further information can also be found at: [Storing medicines at ambient temperatures – SPS - Specialist Pharmacy Service – The first stop for professional medicines advice](#)

Other specific medicines advice related to hot weather conditions:

- Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency(MHRA)
[Three important tips to the public from the MHRA to reduce risk of heatwave affecting their medicines](#)

This reminds people that high temperatures can affect medicines and are advised to keep medicines out of hot cars and direct sunlight, drink more water and stay cool if on diuretics and blood pressure medicines, and check if the medicine increases risk of sunburn.

- Specialist Pharmacy Service (SPS)

[Using transdermal patches safely in healthcare settings](#)

This guidance includes a section on internal and external heat sources, which highlights that heat causes vasodilation, which can increase the absorption of medicines from patches, potentially leading to an overdose.

- Diabetes and hot weather (Diabetes UK)

<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/about-diabetes/looking-after-diabetes/hot-weather>

This guidance supports patients to manage their diabetes at extremes of temperature.

- Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS)

[Professional guidance on the safe and secure handling of medicines](#)

This guidance supports professionals on the safe and secure handling of medicines.