

Cold chain FAQs for customers

Q1. Why did Cardinal Health standardize the packaging for all refrigerated pharmaceuticals?

A1. In 2011 Cardinal Health introduced a new insulated tote program after years of utilizing frozen, water-based gel-packs inside of insulated containers. Cardinal Health is the first pharmaceutical wholesaler in the industry to move to this type of packaging to ensure we are protecting the integrity of the supply chain.

Q2. How does the new packaging solution work?

A2. The refrigerated pharmaceuticals will arrive in a performance qualified insulated tote with phase change panels designed and tested to keep the product between 2°C - 8°C (36°F - 46°F) during shipment. The phase change panels look like sheets of freezer pops and will maintain the product within the labeled temperature storage range from the time it ships from a distribution center to the time it reaches a customer.

Q3. What is the difference between the “green” and “orange” phase change panels?

A3. The green panels will be frozen and packed to protect the product from high temperatures while the orange panels will be refrigerated and will help protect the product from freezing temperatures. These panels will work together to ensure the temperature integrity of the product. Please refer to “What to expect when receiving refrigerated pharmaceuticals” on cardinalhealth.com/coldchain for information about the panels.

Q4. Is the substance inside the phase change panels toxic?

A4. No, the material is completely safe and is a USDA-registered food product. It is non-toxic, environmentally friendly, and reusable. Please note: The substance is vegetable-oil based, and there may be a reaction if it comes into contact with the Styrofoam that is packed within the tote. However, it is completely safe and non-toxic.

Q5. How do customers return items to Cardinal Health using this process?

A5. Complete instructions for returning refrigerated items to Cardinal Health accompany the tote and can also be found on cardinalhealth.com/coldchain.

Please note: Any item not packaged correctly cannot be returned to stock and will need to be destroyed by Cardinal Health. The proper packaging uses panels the customer received from Cardinal Health and is designed to ensure that the package maintains the appropriate temperature range. Customers should not use other temperature controlling packaging (e.g., water-based, frozen gel packs) in conjunction with – or in place of – these panels as it deteriorates the performance of the panels.

We want to ensure that Cardinal Health is keeping the supply chain safe and preventing possible spoiled or adulterated product from re-entering the supply chain. For detailed information on this return process, including how to pack the totes, please view the videos and documents on cardinalhealth.com/coldchain.

Q6. What should a customer do if a panel breaks/leaks?

A6. The customer should take a few steps if one of the panels breaks or leaks:

Contain the spill

Do not dispose of the panels or the tote

Report it to Cardinal Health Customer Service and, when possible, send a message to the Compliance Officer at your servicing distribution center

Please return the panel to Cardinal Health so we can return it to the vendor

Q7. Are frozen pharmaceuticals, such as Cervidil, handled differently?

A7. At this time, there is no change to how frozen pharmaceuticals will be delivered or returned. They will continue to utilize the traditional water-based gel-packs and must be returned the same way. We are currently working on a process for how we will deliver and return frozen product and will share this information as soon as we have it available.