Topic: Multi-Dose Vials

Multi-Dose Vials

Multi-dose vials are different from single-dose vials in several ways. There are important injection safety actions to take when using them to keep them from being contaminated and ensure they are being used safely between patients.

A multi-dose vial is a vial of liquid medication intended for administration (injection or infusion) that contains more than one dose of the medication. Multi-dose vials are labeled as such by the manufacturer. Multi-doses vials are accessed by a new needle and syringe more than once, leaving the potential for infection control issues.

If a needle or syringe is dirty and goes into the vial, it will contaminate the remaining doses of the medication or vaccine inside. Once the vial is contaminated it can no longer be used and must be thrown away. Using a contaminated vial puts the patient at risk for further illness or death. If a contaminated vial is used, public health authorities should be notified immediately.

Injection Safety Steps

Injection safety is important when accessing multi-dose vials. Below are steps to take when using a multi-dose vial:

1) Always prepare a multi-dose vial in a clean space away from patients.
2) Clean hands before touching the vial.
3) Check the label to make sure it is a multi-dose vial and that it isn’t expired or used beyond its date.
4) Ensure the vaccine or medication looks the way the manufacturer describes it.
5) Always use a brand-new, sterile needle and a brand-new, sterile syringe for every dose.
6) Always disinfect the top of the vial thoroughly with an alcohol prep pad, and let it dry before sticking the needle in to draw up the dose.
7) Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for how long a medication or vaccine can be used after the vial is first accessed, and when the vial should be thrown away.
8) Ensure that the vial is stored following the manufacturer’s instructions.

Please reach out to InfectionPrevention@team-iha.org if you have any questions or comments.