

Protecting your medications

Express Scripts aims to keep your medications safe from extreme heat and cold

Express Scripts, the company that manages your prescription drug benefit for Rockwood School District knows that some medications are sensitive to extremes of heat and cold. Because of this, we have procedures in place to protect the integrity of drugs that we ship to you through the **Express Scripts Pharmacy**[®] mail-order service.

We want to address concerns you may have about this issue. Here is some information about the special processes that we have developed.

SHIPPING TEMPERATURE SENSITIVE MEDICATIONS

Express Scripts utilizes a forecasting temperature program to determine how to package and ship each temperature sensitive medication. Forecasted temperatures for the shipping location and your zip code are identified and then matched up to the medication's temperature profile to define the packing and shipping process for your medications.

Additionally, Express Scripts has flexibility built into our dispensing system to allow delivery of medications to alternative addresses if there is a concern with outside temperatures and the normal delivery location. We also have processes in place that are designed to minimize the time in the distribution process, such as: 1) mailing temperature sensitive medications on Monday through Thursday to reduce the opportunity that medication will be exposed to excursion temperatures for excessive amounts of time, 2) ability to mail from a dispensing site in close proximity to the patient's destination, etc.

ROOM TEMPERATURE STORAGE CONDITIONS

Many medications list continuous storage conditions to be controlled room temperature. . The recognized standard-setting organization, the United States Pharmacopoeia (USP)*, defines "controlled room temperature" as 68°F to 77°F, with spikes between a weighted average of 59°F and 86°F. But it also allows for spikes to 104°F or higher for up to 24 hours without negatively impacting the integrity of the medication. Express Scripts extensive experience confirms that most drugs are very stable and do not experience adverse effects during shipping, regardless of temperature exposure.

SHIPPING TO EXTREME TEMPERATURE LOCATIONS

Express Scripts has shipped prescription drugs to all parts of the country, at all times of the year. Based on experience with hundreds of millions of orders, we are confident about the safety and efficacy of the medications that we dispense and ship. Medications with solid dosage forms are rarely compromised by temporary excursions to well below 0°F and as high as 150°F. While it is true that they should not be stored at such temperatures for prolonged periods, short-term exposure is rarely an issue.

EXPOSURE TO EXTREME TEMPERATURE

If you have a question as to the safety of your medication based on the temperature to which it may have been exposed, please call Express Scripts Member Services at the number shown on the back of your prescription drug ID card and ask to speak with a pharmacist. Our pharmacists will help to assess the situation. The pharmacist will consider such factors as:

1. Manufacturer temperature requirements
 - a. What are the listed storage requirements?
 - b. Does the manufacturer allow for exceptions during excursion? If so, were those temperatures exceeded?
 - c. Has the manufacturer provided any additional studies or temperature information that would be useful?
2. Transit time
 - a. How long has the package been in transit?
 - b. How long has the package been outside at the member's house?
 - c. What is the ambient temperature at the point of delivery?
3. Condition upon arrival
 - a. What was the condition of the medication when it arrived? Was it cool to the touch?
 - b. Did the medication show signs of freezing?

Pharmacists will use professional judgment when reviewing manufacturer-accepted storage conditions, transit temperatures, and your responses, to advise on the safe use of the medication in question.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: I live in Arizona. Why doesn't your shipping policy take that into consideration when determining the way my medication will be packaged and shipped?

A: Our shipping policy does take destination into account. In fact, we evaluate the forecasted temperature for your zip code and along with other information, use that to determine how to package and ship your medication. Our packaging has been tested against a wide range of temperatures that could be experienced during shipment.

Express Scripts has established a qualified packing and shipping process for those medications that require them. The methods used have been tested by an independent laboratory to ensure that your medication will be protected from potential temperature spikes during transit and until received by you. The shipping processes have demonstrated the ability to keep the inside package within an identified temperature range, after exposure to either hot or cold temperatures. To do this, it may be necessary to add combinations of frozen, refrigerated or room temperature gel packs to the packaging.

Q: What is the temperature range that my medication can withstand and still be okay to use?

A. Many drugs that are dispensed using special packaging and shipping processes can withstand short-term exposure to both high and low extremes while in transit. The methods of packaging and shipping are chosen to keep the contents protected in all anticipated conditions. Thus, unless there is reason to suspect that your order has been exposed to lengthy extremes, it is probably okay.

Your health and safety is our number one concern. Each of the more than 1 million medications that we send out every week receives the highest degree of care. We use our expertise in all areas of our process to help ensure that yours arrive safely.