Storage instructions

1. On receipt, check the temperature symbol on the outer container.
Neo-Sensitabs with a 2°C to 8°C symbol should be stored in a refrigerator and Neo-Sensitabs with a 25°C as an upper temperature symbol on the outer container should be stored at room temperature (≤25°C).

2. If Neo-Sensitabs are stored in the refrigerator, allow the cartridge to reach room temperature (≤25°C) before being opened, i.e. 30 – 60 minutes, in order to avoid water condensation on the tablets.

3. Neo-Sensitabs with the temperature symbol 2°C to 8°C may be left at room temperature (≤25°C) for up to 2 months, without essential loss of activity.

4. Opened cartridges placed in a dispenser must be used within 2 months for Neo-Sensitabs with the temperature symbol 2°C to 8°C, and within 12 months for Neo-Sensitabs with the temperature symbol below 25°C. The dispenser must be kept at room temperature.

The stability of antimicrobials in paper disks is decreased compared to Neo-Sensitabs. The CLSI (1) recommends frozen storage of paper disks containing beta-lactam antibiotics. In case of Imipenem, Cefaclor and Clavulanic acid combinations, paper disks should be stored frozen until the day of use.
In a comparative stability study between Neo-Sensitabs and Oxoid paper disks (2), it was observed that disks containing Ticarcillin 75 µg lost activity after 15 days at 4-6°C, while Ampicillin 10 µg and Amoxycillin + Clavulanate 20+10 µg disks lost activity after one month at 4-6°C.
The corresponding Neo-Sensitabs were stable at room temperature (and at 4-6°C) during the study period of six months.

Steward et al (3) noticed overdetection of imipenem/meropenem resistance in the project ICARE, most probably due to inactivation of the reagents used (Vitek, disk diffusion etc.) and recommended the use of a second independent antimicrobial susceptibility testing method to validate carbapenem intermediate and resistant strains.

References:
1) NCCLS: Performance Standards for Antimicrobial Disk Susceptibility Testing, 10th Ed. **M2-A10**, January 2009
2) del Cuerpo M. et al: Stability of beta-lactam antibiotics in paper disks and tablets used in the diffusion test. Rev. Esp. Quimioter., **10**, nr. 3,1997 (Spanish).
3) Steward C.D. et al: Antimicrobial susceptibility testing of carbepenems: multicenter validity testing and accuracy levels of 5 antimicrobial test methods for detecting resistance in Enterobacteriaceae and Pseudomonas aeruginosa isolates. J. Clin. Microbiol., **41**, 351-358, 2003.