

## COVID-19 Vaccine Guidance for Transplant Patients

With the emergence of highly transmissible variants, COVID-19 levels in our community are expected to increase into the New Year. While the pandemic has been extremely challenging for transplant patients, vaccines have made a big difference. We are seeing fewer vaccinated patients getting very sick from COVID-19, while unvaccinated patients are more likely to develop a severe infection requiring hospitalization.

The UR Medicine Transplant Program endorses the most recent CDC guidelines and recommends that adult transplant recipients receive a primary vaccine series with either the Pfizer or Moderna mRNA vaccines, an additional 3<sup>rd</sup> full dose and 4<sup>th</sup> booster dose.

If you received the Moderna or Pfizer mRNA vaccines as your primary vaccine series, we recommend:

- A 3<sup>rd</sup> full dose of either mRNA vaccine at least 28 days after completion of the initial 2-dose series.
- A 4<sup>th</sup> mRNA vaccine booster dose five months after your 3<sup>rd</sup> dose

If you received the Johnson & Johnson (J&J/Janssen) vaccine as your first vaccine, we recommend:

- An mRNA booster vaccine at least two months after your first dose.

Pediatric transplant recipients 5-17 years old should be vaccinated with the Pfizer mRNA vaccine and receive an additional primary dose at least 28 days after completion of the initial 2-dose series. 12-17 year olds should receive a booster (4<sup>th</sup> dose) 5 months after their 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Patients awaiting kidney, pancreas and liver transplant at our center and living donors are **required** to be fully vaccinated effective January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022, including those who have previously recovered from a COVID-19 infection. This requirement went into effect in October 2021 for patients awaiting heart transplant.

- Patients are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after their second dose in a two-shot series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as the J&J/Janssen vaccine.
- We strongly encourage all patients to receive the mRNA vaccine series, as well as get the booster when appropriate. The CDC currently recommends everyone 16 years and older receive a booster dose.

If you have been transplanted, treated for rejection or treated for COVID-19 in the last 3 months, you should talk to your transplant team before getting vaccinated.

Even after full vaccination, you should continue to take precautions:

- Wear a mask when you are not at home.
- Wash your hands often.
- Stay six-feet apart from others who you don't live with.
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces.
- Encourage your household members and close contacts be vaccinated against COVID-19.
- Get your flu shot. You can get your flu shot at the same time as your COVID-19 vaccine.

Contact your healthcare team immediately if you start to develop symptoms that might be COVID-19 (fevers, chills, cough, runny nose, fatigue, sore throat, loss of taste and/or smell, diarrhea) or have had an exposure to someone with COVID-19. Early diagnosis is important, as we may be able to provide medications to prevent you from getting sicker.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your transplant team.

For more information regarding vaccines for COVID-19 visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>

For more information regarding COVID-19 vaccines in immunocompromised patients visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/immuno.html>

For more information regarding COVID-19 vaccines in transplant recipients visit: <https://www.myast.org/covid-19-vaccine-information-transplant-recipients>

For help finding a vaccine appointment visit: <https://www.flvaccinehub.com/getting-your-vaccine/>