

Information about the COVID-19 Vaccine for Persons with Certain Health Conditions

The COVID-19 vaccine is safe. But there are some people who should not get the vaccine and others who should talk with their health care provider before being vaccinated. If you are getting this information, it is because we believe you may benefit from talking further with your health care provider before receiving the vaccine, just to be safe.

If you have ever had a severe allergic reaction to anything (including medications, foods, substances, environmental exposures, etc.), or any type of allergic reaction within four hours after receiving another vaccine or injectable medication therapy (including injections into a vein, muscle, or under the skin), you should talk about the COVID-19 vaccine and your allergy history with your primary care provider. Severe and sudden onset allergic reactions (for example, anaphylaxis) can include life-threatening symptoms like swelling of your face, lips/tongue, or throat; wheezing or difficulty breathing; sudden loss of blood pressure; shock; and other serious symptoms that usually require a person be given epinephrine (e.g., an EpiPen injection) and go to a hospital. Any medicine or vaccine can cause an allergic reaction, but the studies that have looked at the safety and effectiveness of the new COVID-19 vaccines found that serious allergic reactions did not happen very often. Since the vaccines have started to be used in public, however, there have been some rare reports of severe allergic reactions occurring in people receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. It is not known if you are more likely to have an allergic reaction to the COVID-19 vaccine because of your past allergic reactions. Therefore, it is recommended that you talk about your allergy history with your primary care provider to better understand the circumstances of your past allergic reactions. You always have the option of putting off the COVID-19 vaccine until there is a different vaccine, or until we better understand the risks to people with past allergic reactions. After discussing with your primary care provider, if you decide you want the vaccine (or if you decide you want the vaccine and don't want to discuss with your primary care provider), we will still give you the vaccine, but we will monitor you after vaccination for 30 minutes to make sure you don't have an immediate reaction to the vaccine.

If you have a severely compromised immune system (e.g., due to chemotherapy, an organ transplant, or other medical condition that makes your immune system not work properly), you should talk about the potential risks and benefits of the COVID-19 vaccine with your health care provider who is managing your immune condition. While we don't expect there to be safety issues

with you receiving the vaccine, we don't yet have information about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine in people with severely compromised immune systems. If you receive the COVID-19 vaccine, it may not work as well for you because your immune system may not be able to create a strong response. So you will need to continue to take steps to protect yourself even after vaccination.

If you are currently pregnant, we ask that you talk about the risks and benefits of the vaccine with your pregnancy health care provider. The new COVID-19 vaccines have not been studied in pregnant women, so we don't have a lot of information on their safety and effectiveness during pregnancy. However, because these mRNA COVID-19 vaccines do NOT contain live-virus, and because the viral mRNA particles break down quickly in your body after they're used to create an immune response, we think the risk of the vaccine to you and your unborn baby is low. We also know that actual infection with the novel coronavirus while you are pregnant can increase your risk of severe illness that could result in hospitalization, ICU admission, or even death. And COVID-19 might put you at increased risk of bad pregnancy outcomes, like preterm birth. Therefore, we think that pregnant women would benefit from COVID-19 vaccination, but we ask that you discuss this with your pregnancy provider who knows you and your baby the best. There is also more information available at the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/pregnancy.html>.

After discussing any above conditions with your health care provider, we will gladly schedule you to receive the COVID-19 vaccine if you and your provider agree with vaccination. We just want to make sure you have the opportunity to discuss the COVID-19 vaccine with your trusted health care provider and are able to make the right decision for your health.