

Transplant Service

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Re: Important information about the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccines

Dear Patient,

We are more than a year into the COVID-19 pandemic. Several very effective vaccines have been developed against COVID-19. We will continue to encourage all of our transplant patients to receive the COVID-19 vaccination as the benefits outweigh the risks. The recommendation is that post-transplant patients get either the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine.

There are studies showing that transplant patients don't have the antibody responses that other patients develop. This means that the vaccine might not cause your body to make enough antibody against the virus. This may mean that despite vaccination, you may still get COVID-19 and it might progress to severe disease. *Because of this reason, we ask you not to assume that you are protected against severe disease after vaccination.*

We have been asked if we would recommend a booster (extra) dose of vaccine. At this time, we are not recommending a third dose of vaccine. We will continue to follow Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and American Society of Transplantation (AST) guidance regarding booster doses. We will update our transplant patient website as new recommendations are made. Please refer to our website for the most current information. www.tinyurl.com/txcovidfaq.

Currently, we are not recommending routine testing for antibodies against COVID after vaccination. Antibodies reflect only part of the immune response to the vaccine. We do not know the level of antibody that will provide protection and whether patients without antibody after vaccination are at more risk. It is important to know that the antibody tests differ, and tests that will ultimately be helpful in guiding clinical decisions need to measure the levels of antibodies to the "spike" protein.

Based on all of the above, we encourage you to get vaccinated but to continue to wash your hands frequently, wear a well-fitting mask, and practice social distancing as much as possible, especially when indoors and around people who are not vaccinated. We strongly recommend all eligible household members of transplant recipients be vaccinated.

For more information please refer to our website: **FAQ: COVID-19 Basics for Transplant Patients** which will be updated as data becomes available. You may access it through this link: www.tinyurl.com/txcovidfaq or with mobile phones that have the capability, through the camera feature. Simply aim the camera at the QR code below and click on the notification that pops up.



Sincerely,

Your UCSF Transplant Team