

April 19, 2021

Dear Transplant Recipient:

The UHN Transplant Program is aware that COVID-19 vaccine has become available or will start to become available in your area soon. We have carefully reviewed the information regarding all the COVID vaccines and believe that it is safe for organ transplant recipients to get vaccinated with any of the available COVID vaccines for your age group.

You can receive vaccine if:

- More than 1 month has passed since your transplant surgery
- More than 1 month has passed since you were treated for rejection
- For Astra-Zeneca, you are over 40 years old and have never had a blood clot
- You are otherwise feeling well and meet the Ministry of Health criteria for receiving vaccine

Please read the following for more information about vaccines:

What is known about the use of COVID-19 vaccines in transplant recipients?

People with transplants were not included in the existing vaccine clinical studies. Therefore, it is not yet known how the approved vaccines will perform in transplant recipients. It is not known if transplant recipients will mount as strong of a response to the virus as people who have a normal immune system.

What side effects are expected?

Common side effects are pain, redness, or swelling where the needle was given, tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, joint pain, and fever. You may also experience nausea, diarrhea, or swollen glands in your underarm.

After I receive the vaccine, do I still need to practice social distancing and wear a mask?

Yes, everyone who is vaccinated will still need to follow ALL established public health measures on physical distancing, mask wearing, and washing hands etc. This is because we know the vaccine protects against COVID19, but we do not yet know how long the protection lasts and whether it prevents transmission to others. Also, it is unknown how effective COVID-19 vaccines will be in transplant recipients, making it even more important to continue to follow all of these guidelines even after you receive a vaccine.

Still have questions?

Please speak to your Coordinator if you have any further questions.