

Tackle the Latest COVID-19 Vaccine Questions

Emerging evidence will help answer current questions about COVID-19 vaccines.

Viral variants. So far, COVID-19 vaccines in the U.S. are working against circulating variants...including the "Delta" variant that was first identified in India and is now of concern in the U.S.

For optimal protection, urge unvaccinated patients to get vaccinated ASAP...or those who've had just one dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine to complete the 2-dose series.

Expect COVID-19 vaccine boosters to be coming...to address evolving variants and extend duration of protection.

Rare adverse events. Reports from VAERS (Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System) often get buzz. Help put them in context.

Explain that anyone can submit a VAERS report...data can be inaccurate...and reports alone can't determine cause and effect.

But clarify that CDC and FDA use these data to rapidly spot unusual trends and investigate. For example, point out that recent reports of myocarditis show this safety system is working.

Continue to vaccinate all eligible patients...age 12 and up.

Pregnancy. Over 120,000 pregnant patients have now been vaccinated...and so far, pregnancy complications (miscarriage, etc) with mRNA COVID-19 vaccines are similar to background rates.

Plus pregnant patients are at higher risk for severe COVID-19.

Continue to encourage COVID-19 vaccination in pregnant patients...and help them make an informed decision.

Immunocompromised patients. Early evidence with mRNA COVID-19 vaccines suggests they're safe in this population.

For instance, adverse effects are in line with other patients...and the vaccines don't seem to trigger autoimmune disease flares.

But immune response after vaccination may be blunted in some patients...such as after an organ transplant or those on chronic steroids.

It's too soon to say how antibody response correlates with COVID-19 protection...so don't recommend antibody testing after vaccination.

Continue to vaccinate immunocompromised patients.

Use our FAQ, Communicating About COVID-19 Vaccination, to address other questions, such as timing of other vaccines.

Key References:

- www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/clinical-considerations/covid-19-vaccines-us.html (6-23-21)
- www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/safety/vsafepregnancyregistry.html (6-23-21)
- Ann Rheum Dis Published online Mar 24, 2021; doi:10.1136/annrheumdis-2021-220272
- JAMA 2021;325(21):2204-6
- medRxiv Published online Apr 9, 2021; doi:10.1101/2021.04.05.21254656

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