

August 23, 2021

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

Dear Transplant Patients,

We are writing to share important information about how you can best protect yourself from COVID-19, including new updates on the COVID-19 vaccine and recommended supplemental doses, as well as public health guidance.

There are currently three COVID-19 vaccines either approved or authorized for emergency use by the FDA. All three are safe and effective at preventing severe infection and death in transplant patients. We **strongly** encourage all of our transplant patients to receive one of these COVID-19 vaccines as soon as possible. While there have been reported complications from the vaccine, those cases are extremely rare.

If you are already fully vaccinated, [the CDC recommends](#) that certain immunocompromised individuals who are more susceptible to infection receive a third (supplemental) mRNA vaccine dose. The FDA updated emergency use authorizations for the [Pfizer-BioNTech](#) and [Moderna COVID-19 vaccines](#).

Please note that while the vaccines help prevent severe COVID-19 disease and hospitalization, they are not 100 percent effective. This means that even if you are fully vaccinated, you may still get COVID-19, and severe disease.

Because of this, we ask that you do not assume you are protected against severe disease after vaccination, and are recommending the following:

- Get a supplemental vaccine dose as soon as possible, as long as it has been at least one month since your second dose. Local pharmacies are all distributing supplemental doses to anyone who is eligible, or you may receive an invitation from UCLA Health to schedule at one of vaccination sites.
- If you are less than one month post-transplant, consult with your transplant team on when to get the supplemental dose.
- You should receive the same vaccine type for your third dose as you received for your first two doses if possible.
- The CDC is not currently recommending supplemental vaccine doses for people who received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. If you received the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine, we will let you know if and when that recommendation changes.
- Wash your hands frequently.

- Continue to wear a mask indoors as well as outdoors if you are in a crowd or unable to physically distance yourself from others.
- Encourage all of your family members and anyone living with you to get the COVID-19 vaccine to help protect themselves — and you — from COVID-19.
- Avoid close contact with unvaccinated individuals.

Additionally, we now know that antibody testing results can be misleading and provide a sense of false confidence that you are protected against COVID-19. As a result, we are not performing or recommending any antibody testing at this time.

Best Regards,

Your UCLA Transplant Team