

The COVID-19 Vaccine and Kidney Disease



The COVID-19 vaccine(s) protect against the **SARS-CoV-2 virus**.

SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

- Cough
- Fever and chills
- Difficulty breathing
- Fatigue/weakness
- Abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting
- Runny nose or sneezing
- Sore throat
- Muscle, head, body aches
- Loss of taste or smell

COMPLICATIONS OF COVID-19

- Severe breathing issues
- Lung inflammation
- Lung damage
- Kidney injury or damage
- Other organ damage (liver, heart)

COVID-19 VACCINE DOSAGE AND TIMING RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Primary series** (if unvaccinated): 2-3 doses of any updated vaccine, 4-8 weeks apart.
- **Boosters** (if previously vaccinated): 1 dose of any updated vaccine every 6 months (Fall and Spring).

KIDNEY PATIENT (PRE-DIALYSIS)

- As above.

DIALYSIS PATIENTS

- May be eligible for an **additional dose** during the primary series.
- May be eligible for **additional booster shots** (up to every 3 months).

TRANSPLANT PATIENTS

- Receive the primary series and any required boosters before surgery or starting immunosuppressant medications.
- Can receive boosters again 3-6 months after surgery, as advised by your healthcare team.

The timing between the primary series and boosters may be altered if you are/were infected with COVID-19 between doses. Talk to your health care team if this applies to you.

WHICH COVID-19 VACCINE SHOULD KIDNEY PATIENTS GET?

- The COVID-19 vaccines are updated yearly to protect against the strains of the virus that are most common or severe.
- Any updated vaccine can be used for both the primary series and booster shots.
- The mRNA vaccines are preferred because they produce a stronger immune response

Check in with your healthcare team to see which vaccine is right for you and when.

Vaccine availability and coverage may vary across the country.

Always follow the advice and recommendations of your healthcare team to determine which vaccines are right for you and when.

COVID-19 VACCINE SAFETY FOR KIDNEY PATIENTS

- Current research and expert opinion states that the COVID-19 vaccines are safe for kidney patients.
- The COVID-19 vaccine has not been shown to damage, change, or worsen kidney function.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I need to get vaccinated to get a transplant?

Local or provincial regulations may require you to get vaccinated prior to transplant surgery. For this reason, we encourage you to talk to your transplant centre or team.

The Canadian Society of Transplantation recommends the COVID-19 vaccine to be given before and after surgery for four (4) main reasons:

1. COVID-19 can cause serious illness in a transplant recipient,
2. Transplant recipients often have other co-existing conditions,
3. The safety of SARS-CoV-2 vaccine has been demonstrated, and
4. Transplantation is not a risk factor for COVID-19 vaccine side effects.

Does it matter which COVID-19 vaccine formulation I receive as a booster this Fall?

No! All vaccines are suitable for kidney patients as a booster this fall. Although mRNA vaccines are recommended as they can produce a stronger immune response.

Which COVID-19 vaccine should I get?

The mRNA vaccines are recommended as they produce a stronger immune response. However, there is no evidence that one mRNA vaccine is better than another for people with kidney disease.

Vaccine availability and coverage may vary across the country.

Always follow the advice and recommendations of your healthcare team to determine which vaccines are right for you and when.