



COVID-19 VACCINE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR TRANSPLANT PATIENTS

Why should I get vaccinated?

Getting vaccinated is one of many steps you can take to protect yourself from COVID-19. Vaccines work with your immune system so your body will be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed. Protection from COVID-19 is critically important because for some people, it can cause severe illness or death. Stopping a pandemic requires using all the tools available. Other steps, like wearing face masks and social distancing, help reduce your chance of being exposed to the virus or spreading it to others. Getting the COVID-19 vaccine, combined with following recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), will offer the best protection against COVID-19.

Should transplant patients get the COVID-19 vaccine?

To our knowledge, none of the COVID-19 vaccines approved or in the approval pipeline have been tested in transplant patients, including the vaccine Jackson is currently able to offer. As such, we do not have the data necessary to speak for their safety nor efficacy in transplant patients. That said, we do know there are significant risks to acquiring COVID-19 for transplant patients, and so we think it is reasonable for transplant patients to consider taking a vaccine once available to them. The CDC is recommending the vaccine to all people older than 16 or 18 years old (depending on the vaccine).

Who is able to get the vaccine now?

Currently, we are able to offer the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to transplant patients, both pre- and post-transplant, who are 65 years or older, and who are United States residents. You will be required to present a government-issued photo ID at your appointment. Please see the chart at the end of this document for more information. We do not know when it will be available to patients younger than 65.

Do I need to contact my primary care doctor before getting the vaccine?

Yes. You should speak with your doctor first about whether the COVID-19 vaccine is safe for you.

If I decide to take the vaccine, when should I take it?

We would definitely urge pre-transplant patients to consider taking the vaccine before transplant, as we have seen in other vaccines they can be less effective in patients recently transplanted due to the immune suppressing drugs given at the time of transplant. After transplant, we discourage patients from taking the vaccine in the first month, but they should consider taking it after that. Additionally, if you have been treated for possible rejection recently, we would recommend waiting at least 30 days after completion of rejection treatment. If you have any questions, please call us at 305.355.5000.

How are you contacting MTI patients to get scheduled for the vaccine?

We are sending text messages and/or E-mail to eligible MTI patients based on information we have in patient records with a link to register. If you are an MTI patient 65 years or older and you have not received that message, please call us at 305.355.5000 and we will give you the information for registration.

What should I bring to the appointment?

Please bring a government-issued photo ID with your date of birth. If this ID is issued by a foreign government, please also bring proof of residency in the United States such as a utility bill, lease, or property-tax statement. Please see the chart at the end of this document for more information. Vaccination is only available at this time to those who live in the United States. You will also need to bring your text or e-mail confirmation notice. Blank confirmation notices will not be accepted.

How much does the vaccine cost?

There is no charge for COVID-19 vaccination at Jackson.

If I have health insurance, will my insurance company be billed?

No. Jackson will not request any health insurance documents at the time of the appointment, so your health insurance company will not be charged.

Can I transfer my appointment to someone else?

No. The appointment is not transferable.

Who is the manufacturer of the vaccine provided at Jackson?

Currently, Jackson is exclusively providing the COVID-19 vaccine manufactured by Pfizer. If we are providing a different approved COVID-19 vaccine on the day of your appointment, you will receive additional information at that time.

How many shots of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine are required?

The Pfizer vaccine requires two doses, administered 21 days apart. It takes approximately two weeks to develop antibodies after completing both doses of the vaccine.

Will I need to schedule the appointment for my second dose of the vaccine in 21 days?

You will be automatically registered for a follow-up appointment to receive the second shot 21 days after your first. The vaccine is only fully effective after receiving both shots, and we require your commitment to receive both at Jackson.

If I received my first shot at another facility, can I make an appointment at Jackson for my second dose?

No. Both doses of the vaccine must be administered by Jackson. We are unable to provide a second dose for patients who received the first dose from another provider.

What are the side effects?

Possible short-term side effects of the Pfizer vaccine include pain at the injection site, as well as fatigue, chills, and fever.

How effective is the Pfizer vaccine? Is it safe?

Studies have shown this vaccine to be 95 percent effective. In regards to the safety of the vaccine, no serious safety concerns have been reported.

If I get this vaccine, will I be injected with the virus?

No. Unlike traditional vaccines, the Pfizer vaccine is an mRNA vaccine – or messenger RNA vaccine. According to the CDC, mRNA vaccines contain material from the virus that causes COVID-19 that gives our cells instructions for how to make a harmless protein that is unique to the virus. After our cells make copies of the protein, they destroy the genetic material from the vaccine. Our bodies recognize that the protein should not be there and build T-lymphocytes and B-lymphocytes that will remember how to fight the virus that causes COVID-19 if we are infected in the future.

Will I need to continue wearing a mask and practice social distancing after I have a vaccine?

Yes. The CDC still recommends that during the pandemic people wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth when in contact with others outside your household, when in healthcare facilities, and in any public places. Social distancing is also recommended, in part because vaccine doses will be limited and it will take time to immunize enough of the population to stop the spread.

Should I still get vaccinated if I already had COVID-19?

Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, you may be advised to get a COVID-19 vaccine even if you have been sick with COVID-19 before. We are still learning how long immunity to coronavirus lasts after an infection or a vaccination. Typically, an infection causes better immunity than a vaccine, but not always. Further guidance from the CDC and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is pending.

Are pregnant or immunocompromised individuals eligible for the vaccine?

No data is available at this time on the safety or efficacy of the Pfizer vaccine in these populations.

If I have an auto-immune or chronic medical condition, should I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Given the complexity and the multitude of conditions, we advise anyone with a chronic medical condition and/or a condition that affects your immune system to seek the opinion of your physician and/or a subject matter expert that can support you in this decision.

PROOF OF RESIDENCY INFORMATION FOR COVID-19 VACCINE CURRENTLY FOR AGE 65 AND OLDER ONLY

