

August 13, 2021

Information about COVID-19 vaccination continues to rapidly change. Recently the FDA has authorized a third dose of vaccine for immunocompromised patients who received an mRNA vaccine (Moderna or Pfizer) under the EUA. Here are some commonly asked questions and answers:

**Why is a third shot being recommended?**

Some patients, especially patients with compromised immune systems, may not have a strong response after receiving vaccines. In these cases, public health officials may recommend an additional dose of the vaccine. In the case of COVID-19, transplant patients who received mRNA vaccine (Moderna or Pfizer) should receive a third dose of mRNA vaccine after completing the initial vaccine series.

**Should I receive a third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine?**

We recommend that you receive a third dose of the vaccine if you 1) received an mRNA vaccine and 2) have a transplant.

**I received the J&J vaccine – should I get another shot?**

Currently, there is not a recommendation for additional vaccination for J&J recipients. We are closely following for updates and will release additional information when it becomes available.

**Does the third shot need to match my previous two mRNA vaccines?**

There is currently limited data regarding “mixing and matching” vaccines. It is currently recommended that attempts be made to match the additional dose type to the mRNA primary series, however if you cannot get an appointment scheduled for the same vaccine, it is okay to get the other vaccine.

**When should I receive my third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine?**

At least 28 days after your second dose of mRNA vaccine. If you had your transplant within the last 3 months or recently had an episode of rejection, please contact your provider.

**Should I receive a third dose of vaccine if I’ve had COVID-19?**

You should still receive the vaccine if you have been previously diagnosed with COVID-19. Please check with your provider about timing.

**Where should I go for my third dose of vaccine?**

Contact your local pharmacy or primary care doctor to schedule your third dose of vaccine.

**Do I need to bring proof of my medical history?**

In the effort to rapidly vaccinate as many immunocompromised patients as possible, proof of medical history is not required to receive a third dose of vaccine. If you encounter issues with receiving a third dose of vaccine, please contact your provider at the MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute.

**What information is available about third dose vaccine testing in transplant patients?**

While data is limited in transplant recipients, we believe that a third dose of vaccine outweighs any theoretical risks given that transplant patients have worse outcomes from COVID-19 infection compared to non-transplant recipients. A recent randomized clinical trial published data indicating that when compared to placebo, a third dose of vaccine resulted in higher rates of antibody formation and more CD4+ T cell formation against COVID-19 (<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2111462>). This study did not evaluate patient outcomes, such as rates of COVID-19 or hospitalizations.