

Patient & Caregiver Education

COVID-19 Vaccine for Adult Cancer Patients

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN), other leading cancer-related organizations, and Hawai'i Pacific Health recommend the vaccine to all cancer patients. If you are still unsure whether you should get a COVID-19 vaccine, please ask your oncologist at your next scheduled clinic appointment. It is your choice whether to get vaccinated or not.



As millions of people have received the COVID-19 vaccines, we have learned more about the benefits and side effects for people with high risks, such as those with cancer

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has said having a weakened immune system should not stop someone from receiving the current COVID-19 vaccine. This includes those with cancer or those taking medication that affects their immune systems. However, in these cases, the vaccine is less effective than in someone who does not have a weakened immune system.

I am receiving treatment for my cancer or I am a cancer survivor. Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

- YES, unless you had a bone marrow or stem cell transplant or certain other treatments, or if you are currently in a research study, it's okay to receive the Pfizer (Comirnaty) or Moderna mRNA COVID-19 vaccine or the Johnson & Johnson vector vaccine. If you are unsure, ask your cancer team. There is more information on the back of this sheet about the different types of COVID-19 vaccines.

When should I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

- If you are about to begin cancer therapy, you should get the vaccine before you start.
- If you are already on cancer therapy, get the vaccine approximately 4 to 7 days before your next round. If you have a low count of a certain white blood cell (are neutropenic), wait until you no longer have this condition.
- If you are a cancer survivor, get the vaccine as soon as possible.

Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine if I am a part of a research study?

- In most cases, you should be able to get the vaccine. However, check with your research team to confirm this. Some research studies may not allow you to receive the vaccine.

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I had a bone marrow or stem cell transplant, CAR-T cell therapy, or TIL therapy for my cancer.

Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?

- If you are about to have treatment, speak with your cancer team for guidance.
- If you had your transplant within the past year, contact your transplant center to see if you should receive the vaccine. If your treatment was longer than one year ago, ask your oncologist.
- If you are currently receiving treatment, you should wait at least three months after therapy to receive the vaccine.

Should my family and friends I live with or see often get the vaccine?

- Your family, friends, and caregivers you see often should get the vaccine.

What are the different types of vaccines and which is recommended for those with cancer?

- The following are the two types of COVID-19 vaccines being offered in the United States:
 - o mRNA vaccines include those being produced by Pfizer (Comirnaty) and Moderna.
 - o Vector vaccines include those that are being produced by Johnson & Johnson.
- The Pfizer (Comirnaty), Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson vaccines do not contain live viruses.
- Each vaccine may cause different symptoms and more information can be found on their individual FDA fact sheets, see the link below.
- The Pfizer (Comirnaty) and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines need more than one shot. The first shot starts building protection. You'll need a second shot a few weeks after to get the most protection from the vaccine. See below regarding the recommendation for an additional dose.
- The Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine needs one shot initially.

What about an additional dose or booster dose of the vaccine?

- For those that received the Pfizer (Comirnaty) or Moderna vaccine, the FDA and CDC has recommended that those with moderately and severely weakened immune systems, including cancer patients, should receive one additional dose of the mRNA vaccine at least 28 days after your 2nd dose. According to the CDC, you may also receive a single COVID-19 booster dose (Pfizer, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson) at least 6 months after completing your third mRNA vaccine dose.
- For those that received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, you may receive a booster dose at least 2 months after your initial single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. You may receive a dose of any of the available vaccines as a booster.

If you are experiencing symptoms or think you may have COVID-19, contact your primary care provider's (PCP) office. If you do not have a PCP, you may contact the Hawai'i Pacific Health COVID-19 Virtual Clinic at 808-462-5430.

For more information, please visit:

- www.hawaiipacifichealth.org/covid19vaccine
- www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html
- <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/eua/index.html> Fact Sheets for recipients and caregivers.

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