

Dear Current and Prospective Organ Donor Patients:

As we step into a new era with a COVID-19 vaccine available, we want to provide you with important information to answer some of your questions.

This letter is to give you guidance from your transplant team regarding the COVID-19 vaccination for both those who are inquiring and being evaluated for organ donation, as well as those who have donated an organ.

There are several vaccines under development in the US and two COVID-19 vaccines that are currently FDA (Federal Drug Administration) approved for emergency use distribution. We are not certain when these vaccines will be available to you as a patient. Each state has the responsibility of creating a vaccine plan. As we serve many patients in different states, at the bottom of this letter we have provided you with the website links to Utah's and some of our surrounding state health departments. We expect that a majority of our patients will have the opportunity to receive a COVID-19 vaccine by late spring or early summer of 2021. This date is a current estimate, and the timeline may change outside of our control. Traditionally organ donors are some of the healthiest people in our population, even after they have donated an organ. We advise each person to work with his or her Primary Care Physician to evaluate his or her personal risk level to determine when you will be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. Your Primary Care Provider will have a more holistic picture of your current health. Organ donation does not categorized a person as a high-risk member of our population. Each health department will have a different schedule in distribution, please contact your local health department or go online for more information.

Do we recommend the vaccine for you?

Vaccine outcome data is actively being gathered by the CDC regarding the COVID-19 vaccine. We look at risk verses benefit for patients, which means we ask the question, "Is there more benefit than risk for each patient?" The University of Utah Infectious Disease Physicians, Transplant Physicians and Transplant Surgeons believe there is a greater risk to our patients who become infected with the COVID-19 virus than their risk of receiving the vaccine. Based on the current data, we DO recommend our patients receive the currently available mRNA COVID-19 Vaccine (Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech). The mRNA vaccine is not a live virus vaccine. Both of these vaccines require two doses. You must receive both doses. Receiving the vaccine will not prevent you from donating.

If you are considering participating in a vaccine study, please check with the transplant team. Depending on the type of vaccine the study is using may prevent you from donating for an undefined timeframe.

We hope this information helps answer questions you have regarding the current COVID-19 vaccines. Below are additional resources for you. As always, your transplant team is here to support you.

The following links to COVID-19 Vaccination Plans for some of the surrounding states. These websites also contain information for facilities wishing to administer the vaccine:

AZ: <https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/infectious-disease-epidemiology/index.php#novel-coronavirus-vaccine>

CO: <https://covid19.colorado.gov/vaccine>

ID: <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/>

NV: <https://www.immunizenevada.org/covid-19-vaccine-planning>

NM: <https://cv.nmhealth.org/covid-vaccine/>

UT: <https://immunize.utah.gov/covid-19-vaccine/>

WY: <https://health.wyo.gov/publichealth/immunization/wyoming-covid-19-vaccine-information/>