COVID-19 Vaccine Availability at U of U Health

U of U Health is now offering COVID-19 vaccine to a limited group of U of U Health patients (ages 16 and older) with specific medical conditions including solid organ transplant (SOT) recipients. Learn about requirements and other qualifying conditions [here](#).

If you are eligible, there is nothing you need to do at this time. We will contact you directly with an email, phone call, or text message when it’s your turn to schedule your vaccination. Patients will be contacted directly on a rolling basis as we receive more vaccine.

Our patients can also choose to get their COVID-19 vaccine from the state and we recommend you choose the vaccine provider with the earliest available appointment. To learn more about vaccine distribution through the state of Utah, visit [coronavirus.utah.gov/vaccine](https://coronavirus.utah.gov/vaccine) or call the state’s COVID-19 Information Hotline: 1-800-456-7707.

SOT-specific COVID-19 Vaccine Guidelines

Note that COVID-19 vaccines may not work as well for people with certain medical conditions, or who are receiving treatments, that impact the immune system. You can find out what this means for certain SOT recipients below. If you have questions, please contact your provider.

1. For SOT recipients **>6 months post-transplant** on stable immunosuppression (IS) AND no graft rejection* treatment within 3 months: Recommend to receive COVID-19 vaccination as soon as it becomes available.

2. For SOT recipients **<6 months post-transplant**, take into consideration type of induction-immunosuppression:

   a. **Immunosuppression induction with Alemtuzumab or having received Rituximab prior to transplant**: Recommend deferring vaccination until 6-months post-transplantation or 6-months after last rituximab dose.

   b. **Immunosuppression induction with thymoglobulin (ATG) or basiliximab**: Recommend deferring vaccination until 3-months post-transplantation.

   c. **SOT-recipients who did NOT receive any immunosuppression induction**: Recommend to receive COVID-19 vaccination as early as 1-month post-transplant.
**NOTE:** For SOT-recipients receiving graft rejection therapy or other conditions requiring use of T or B-cell depleting agents, recommend delaying vaccination following rejection-episode as follows:

- Delay vaccination by at least 6 months if Rituximab or Alemtuzumab was used.
- Delay vaccination by at least 3 months if only ATG alone or with pulse steroids were used.

**Should solid organ transplant patients get the COVID-19 vaccine?**

The safety of mRNA vaccines is actively being investigated in solid organ transplant recipients. Some transplanted individuals have already received the COVID-19 vaccine as part of the Emergency Use Authorization. Based on their mechanism of action, expert opinion is that these vaccines are unlikely to trigger rejection episodes or have more severe side effects in transplant recipients. Outcome data in transplant recipients will continue to be evaluated as more post-transplant recipients receive the vaccines.

The U of U Health Infectious Disease Physicians, Transplant Physicians and Transplant Surgeons believe the risk of COVID-19 disease remains high for transplant recipients, and the benefit of receiving the COVID-19 vaccine is far greater than the potential risk or complication from the COVID-19 vaccine. The American Society of Transplant also released a FAQ sheet on 1/25/2021 stating there is more benefit to the post-transplant patient receiving the COVID-19 vaccine than not receiving it.

Based on this current data, we strongly recommend pre and post-transplant patients receive the currently available mRNA COVID-19 Vaccine (Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech). If you were transplanted in the past 12 months, talk with your transplant team regarding the timing of your vaccination in order to assure you achieve the maximal level of immunity from the vaccine.

Both of the currently available vaccines require two doses; you must receive both doses to achieve maximum level of protection from the vaccine. This means you must be able to commit to scheduling time to receive the second vaccine dose (21 days to 28 days post first dose) from wherever you receive the first dose.

The data below comes from the first published study of COVID-19 vaccination side effects in transplant recipients. This early study: “Safety of the First Dose of SARS-CoV-2 Vaccination in Solid Organ Transplant Recipients” shows mild to moderate side effects similar to elderly patients in the general population.
We hope this information helps answer questions you have regarding the current COVID-19 vaccines related to solid organ transplant. We’ve included below some additional resources. Your transplant team is available to answer your questions and provide guidance regarding COVID-19 and your transplant.

If you have any questions about eligibility to receive vaccine please call the University of Utah Health COVID19 Vaccine Hotline at 801-587-0712 or (toll free) 844-745-9325.

American Society of Transplant COVID-19 Vaccine FAQ Sheet:  

Coronavirus Vaccine (U of U Health)  
https://healthcare.utah.edu/coronavirus/vaccine/

COVID-19 Vaccines (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)  

COVID-19 Vaccination Plans for surrounding states.  
Utah: https://coronavirus.utah.gov/vaccine-distribution/#lhd  
Colorado: https://covid19.colorado.gov/vaccine  
Idaho: https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/covid-19-vaccination  
Montana: https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/cdepi/diseases/coronavirusmt/covid19vaccineavailability  
New Mexico: https://cv.nmhealth.org/covid-vaccine/  