

## COVID-19 Concerns for Patients in Need of Transplant

### Why is COVID-19 a concern for patients who need a transplant?

After your transplant, you will be taking anti-rejection medicines that make it harder for your body to fight infection. This means that if you get COVID-19 after transplant, you are at a higher risk for a more severe, maybe life-threatening illness.

### If I get COVID-19, can I still get a transplant?

Contact your transplant team if you test positive for COVID-19 to discuss when it is safe for you to have a transplant.

### What is the UW Health Transplant Center doing to reduce COVID-19 risks?

- We require our patients get the COVID-19 vaccines before adding them to the transplant waitlist and undergoing transplant surgery to protect the patient and our other transplant patients
- We will test you for COVID-19 before your transplant
- We have visitor guidelines to decrease the risk of spreading COVID-19 to our patients
- We require masks in high-risk settings including waiting rooms, registration areas, exam and procedure rooms at our transplant clinic locations

### What steps can patients take to make their transplant safer?

Keep up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines! Being fully vaccinated before transplant will help your body develop protection against COVID-19. This will also help protect other patients and staff in the hospital and clinic. Try your best to avoid getting exposed to COVID-19. Wear a mask when you go out in public and practice good handwashing.

### Does every patient need to get the COVID-19 vaccines before transplant?

Exceptions will be made for those patients that are critically ill and do not have time to get the vaccines before their transplant or those with a medical contraindication. No other exceptions will be granted. Patients that are transplanted urgently who did not have time to get the vaccines before transplant are expected to get the vaccines after their transplant.

### Can I be active on the list after I get my vaccines?

Most patients can be active on the list 2 weeks after they complete their COVID-19 vaccines. Please let your transplant team know when you get any vaccines so they can discuss timing of transplant with you.

### Does it matter which COVID-19 vaccine I get?

The mRNA vaccines (Pfizer and Moderna) are preferred for transplant patients.

### Where can I get the COVID-19 vaccines?

You can get the vaccines in your local community. We also give COVID-19 vaccinations in our transplant clinic at University Hospital.

### Do I still need the COVID-19 vaccines if I have had COVID-19?

Yes. The degree of protection against infection is unknown for those who have had COVID-19. We do know that getting the vaccines will increase your protection against the virus. We want to protect patients as much as we can against the virus, and the vaccines will help do that.

### How many COVID-19 vaccine shots do I need?

We **strongly** encourage our patients to stay current on available vaccines. Learn more [here](#) and discuss your vaccine status with your physician.

### What should my support person and household contacts do to keep me safe?

Your risk of getting COVID-19 is much lower if the people you are in close contact with also get the COVID-19 vaccines. We **strongly** suggest that your support persons and all members of your household stay up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines. Anyone who will be in direct contact with you right after your transplant should be tested for COVID-19 24- 72 hours before you go home. Direct contacts should also follow CDC guidance to avoid COVID-19 exposure. Anyone who tests positive should quarantine per CDC guidance. They should stay away from you until they have fully recovered.

### What should I do if I am exposed to someone who tests positive for COVID-19?

You should get tested 3-4 days after an exposure to COVID-19. Monitor for symptoms per CDC/Public Health guidance. Contact your transplant team. They will discuss the plan of care and when it is safe for you to have a transplant.

### How do I find out if I can have a visitor/support person come with me to University Hospital?

We adjust our visitor policy and food restrictions based on the rates of COVID-19 in the community. For the most current information, check our website [uwhealth.org/about-us/patient-visitor-guidelines](http://uwhealth.org/about-us/patient-visitor-guidelines) before all visits.