

Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe? How effective is it?

The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted emergency approval for the COVID-19 vaccine. This essentially means that the FDA granted approval based on less information than is normally required, as the typical process takes years to evaluate a new vaccine. The vaccine is said to be the best hope for ending the pandemic, but given how new it is, the public has had a lot of questions about its safety and efficacy.

The vaccines require 2 separate injections given 3 or 4 weeks apart. Neither vaccine uses live COVID-19 viral particles, and therefore cannot give you COVID-19. The COVID-19 vaccines are considered safe. Some people have experienced some mild side-effects from the vaccine including headache, muscle or joint pain, fatigue, and fever.

Should patients with amyloidosis receive the COVID-19 vaccine?

We have received many inquiries about whether amyloidosis patients should receive the vaccine. All patients should receive the vaccine, however, each patient should consult with their individual specialist, as other concomitant illness or allergies may be present and the recommendation for that patient may change.

We believe it should be safe for patients with amyloidosis to receive vaccine, although some may not get as protective response as healthier individuals. Despite this historic advance, one has to continue to stay safe and smart for several more months to come.

If I am going to get a COVID-19 vaccine, should I alter or delay my amyloidosis treatment regimen?

At current, we do not have reason to believe that we need to change a patient's treatment regimen or schedule based on when/if they receive a COVID-19 vaccine. However, if a patient has a history of reactions to treatment, a history of reactions to vaccines, or if a patient is just starting a new treatment, it may be wise to wait sometime between the vaccine and the treatment.

Should patients who are immunocompromised or who have had an organ transplant get the COVID-19?

Patients with compromised immune systems should plan to be vaccinated against COVID-19. In patients with solid organ transplants, the efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccine is unknown. The American Society of Transplantation is recommending that transplant recipients and their household members should receive vaccination when it becomes available. This recommendation is based off previous vaccination guidelines for solid organ transplant recipients. It is thought that patients in both the solid organ transplant population and immunocompromised patient population may not have as robust of an antibody response to the vaccine as the general population.

As always, please check with your healthcare team before making any medical decisions.