

Guide Use of mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines for Special Populations

Which adults should receive an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine?

Almost everyone. The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna products are not live vaccines...and benefits typically outweigh theoretical risks.

Urge patients to get either vaccine series when eligible.

History of allergic reactions. Recommend vaccinating most patients with a prior severe reaction to food, latex, or oral meds.

Ask if patients have had hives, wheezing, or anaphylaxis within 4 hours of exposure to any other vaccines or injectable meds. This immediate allergic reaction is a precaution to COVID-19 vaccination.

These patients CAN also be vaccinated. Balance the benefits of protecting patients from COVID-19 against the rare risk of a reaction.

Recommend observing these patients...and those with prior anaphylaxis due to ANY cause...for 30 min, rather than the usual 15 min.

Don't recommend vaccinating patients with a history of an immediate or severe allergic reaction to excipients, such as polyethylene glycol (PEG) or polysorbate...or to a first COVID-19 vaccine dose.

Special populations. Feel comfortable recommending the COVID-19 vaccine for patients who are immunocompromised due to meds or conditions...pregnant...or breastfeeding. Help these patients make an informed decision...since data are limited.

For example, pregnant patients seem to be at higher risk for severe COVID-19. Educate that animal studies don't raise concerns about mRNA COVID-19 vaccines in pregnancy...and these vaccines don't affect our DNA.

Tell patients planning pregnancy that there's no evidence to suggest mRNA COVID-19 vaccines cause infertility.

But Health Canada suggests delaying pregnancy at least 28 days after the vaccine series...out of an abundance of caution.

Prior COVID-19 infection. Recommend vaccinating these patients...even if they happen to contract COVID-19 between getting their first and second dose.

But consider delaying after a recent COVID-19 infection if vaccine supply is limited...since reinfection within 90 days is uncommon.

Suggest waiting at least 90 days to vaccinate if patients receive convalescent plasma or monoclonal antibodies to treat COVID-19...due to possible interference with the vaccine immune response.

For now, continue to emphasize wearing masks, distancing, etc...even AFTER immunization.

Get answers to many other questions in our chart, *Communicating About COVID-19 Vaccination*...such as age and ethical considerations.

Key References:

Cite this document as follows: Article, Guide Use of mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines for Special Populations, Pharmacist's Letter Canada, February 2021

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Pharmacist's Letter Canada. February 2021, No

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