

COVID-19 Vaccine Information

We at Metropolitan Nephrology Associates strongly encourage all patients to get the COVID-19 vaccine once available unless they have a rare contraindication*. We believe it is an effective tool in helping to limit the spread of COVID-19 and also in preventing more severe disease. We strongly support the science behind the vaccines and all of our providers have gotten COVID-19 vaccines.

Regarding safety: While we can never know exactly how each individual will respond to these vaccines, the three currently approved vaccines (Moderna, Pfizer, Johnson and Johnson) showed no serious adverse side effects during the clinical trials. Most common side effects included pain, swelling, or redness at injection site. Other side effects include fevers, chills, fatigues, muscle aches, and headaches all of which were self-limited and lasted for generally 1 to 2 days.

Regarding efficacy: The three currently approved vaccines were very efficacious in reducing infections with the original COVID-19 virus. However, with the new mutations of COVID-19 throughout the world, research is ongoing regarding how efficacious the vaccines will be in reducing these infections. It is also unclear for exactly how long immunity lasts from these vaccines and research is still ongoing.

Regarding safety and efficacy for immunosuppressed patients: The initial studies did not include immunocompromised patients and safety/efficacy is still under investigation. However, expert opinion is that based on how these vaccines work, they are unlikely to trigger greater side effects than was found in the original study participants. It is unclear how effective these vaccines will be in reducing COVID-19 infections in this patient population and the immune response may be weaker as seen with other routine vaccinations in this patient population. However, both MNA and local transplant centers are still strongly recommending vaccination in this patient population.

Regarding where to obtain the vaccine: We do not provide the vaccine in the office nor do we have plans in the future to distribute the vaccine. More information can be found about how to obtain the vaccine on the following websites

District of Columbia - <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/vaccinatedc>

Maryland - <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/pages/vaccine>

Virginia - <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine/>

***Who shouldn't get the vaccine:** Currently the only people not recommended to get the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are people with a severe allergic reaction to a previous dose of a mRNA covid vaccine, someone who has an allergic reaction to polyethylene glycol or polysorbate, or someone who has an allergic reaction to any other component of the vaccine. Patients with immediate allergic reactions to other vaccines should also talk with their primary care doctor before getting this vaccine.

For Johnson and Johnson vaccine, the only people not recommended to get the vaccine are individuals who have had an allergic reaction to any individual component of the vaccine or a prior severe allergic reaction to a previous dose of the Johnson and Johnson vaccine. Patients with immediate allergic reactions to other vaccines should also talk with their primary care doctor before getting this vaccine.

For further information: The CDC website has ongoing updated guidance regarding the vaccines along with additional frequently asked questions.