

COVID-19 Vaccination Information for Patients with Gastrointestinal or Liver Diseases on Immunosuppressive Therapy

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The COVID-19 vaccinations approved for use in Australia are highly effective in protecting against symptoms of COVID-19 infection. They cannot give you COVID-19 infection.

There are currently two approved vaccines in Australia, taken as 2 doses:

Pfizer COMIRNARTY mRNA vaccination
Prevented symptomatic COVID-19 in 95%
2 doses given 3 weeks apart



AstraZeneca Viral vector vaccination
Prevented symptomatic COVID-19 in 82%
when 2 doses given ≥12 weeks apart



There are plans for a further vaccination to be available in 2021: Novavax protein subunit vaccination prevented symptomatic COVID-19 in 89% of patients.

All vaccinations have been shown to prevent severe infection and hospitalisation in 100% of patients after completing the recommended doses.



In the future, there may be other vaccinations available in Australia.

These vaccinations must pass safety, quality and effectiveness tests and be approved by the TGA.

The COVID-19 vaccinations are considered safe and effective and recommended for patients experiencing and taking medication for:

- Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) Pfizer COMIRNARTY approved for ≥ 16 years
- Liver disease AZ vaccine approved for ≥18 years but not recommended < 50 years
- Liver transplantation (association with rare thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome)

The decision to give the COVID-19 vaccination in some population groups will need specialist medical advice. Discuss with your specialist if you:

- Are less than 16 years of age as COVID-19 vaccines are not approved in Australia for people less than 16 years of age.
- Have a history of allergic reactions to medicines that caused you to have trouble breathing.
- Are pregnant or planning pregnancy.

Some medications may decrease how well the COVID-19 vaccine works. COVID-19 vaccines should not be administered at the same time as other vaccines. Discuss with your medical specialist the timing of your vaccination if you are taking the following medications:

- More than 10mg of prednisolone daily; Rituximab. Can be given at any time in relation to biologic medicines.

What additional steps can I take to protect myself against COVID-19?

- Ensure up to date with Flu vaccination and Pneumococcal vaccination.
- Remain on your medications to keep your condition under control.
- Maintain good hand hygiene.
- Practice social distancing and abide by local state government COVID-19 restrictions in your area.

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