

Cancer and the COVID-19 Vaccine: What's Right for You?

PAID PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

Most cancer patients are being advised to get the COVID-19 vaccine, but some cases require special consideration. Talk with your oncologist as soon as possible to see what's right for you. Here's why.

Vaccines in general trick the body's immune system into fighting infection, by presenting it with an impostor. In effect, the COVID-19 vaccine says, "I'm showing you what this virus looks like," without being the virus itself. The body's immune system mounts a defense and then remembers what to do if it gets exposed to the real virus.

Most cancer therapies suppress the body's immune response, and active treatment could interfere with the COVID-19 vaccine's effectiveness. The vaccine would still be safe, but it might not work as well if it's trying to rev up an immune system compromised by cancer treatment. Chemo, immunotherapy, and radiation can all suppress the immune system.

Oncologists are considering ways to get around these limitations. For example, spacing out chemo infusions can give the body's immunity a chance to rebound so that it can work better

with a vaccine. Each individual case is unique, so talk with your oncologist, including your radiation oncologist if you are undergoing radiation.

Everyone, including those vaccinated, should continue wearing a mask, practicing good hand hygiene, and social distancing. At RBOI we take every safety precaution to limit the spread of the virus in our clinic settings. For more information, including places offering the vaccine, go to floridahealthcovid19.gov.

What about Allergic Reactions?

Allergic reactions to the COVID-19 vaccine are rare: no higher than the rate of allergic reaction to the flu vaccine. The FDA requires that people be watched for 15 minutes after they get the vaccine. In addition, whoever is giving the vaccine should have an epinephrine pen or other medicine on hand to counteract any severe allergic response.

What are Clinical Trial Phases?

Phase 1: 20-100 healthy volunteers get the vaccine. Researchers ask:

- 👉 Is this vaccine safe?
- 👉 Are there any serious side effects?
- 👉 How does the vaccine dose relate to any side effects?
- 👉 Is the vaccine causing an immune response?

Phase 2: Several hundred volunteers get the vaccine. Researchers ask:

- 👉 What are the most common short-term side effects of the vaccine?
- 👉 What is the body's immune response?
- 👉 Are there signs that the vaccine is protective?

Phase 3: 1,000 or more volunteers get the vaccine. Researchers ask:

- 👉 How do disease rates compare between people who get the vaccine and those who do not?
- 👉 How well can the vaccine protect people from disease?

The FDA approves a vaccine only if:

- 👉 It is safe and effective.
- 👉 Its benefits outweigh the risks.

Phase 4: The FDA continues to track vaccine safety and effectiveness in the general public. This is also called the "post-marketing phase."

4%

Participants with a history of cancer in clinical trials for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine

21,720

People receiving the Pfizer vaccine in its Phase 3 clinical trial

12

Days after injection before the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine becomes effective

1-866-779-6121

Florida Dept. of Health COVID-19 Call Center, available 24/7



Continue Your Cancer Care

The American Cancer Society and other leading cancer organizations endorse continuing your screening and treatment during the pandemic. Hospitals and medical systems across the US are vaccinating health care providers and taking additional steps to ensure a safe environment for people receiving cancer care.



Patient-centered radiation oncology close to home

The Villages 352.259.2200
Ocala 352.732.0277
Timber Ridge 352.861.2400
Inverness 352.726.3400
Lecanto 352.527.0106

RBOI.com

Like us on Facebook