

EULAR  
07.02.2022  
Kilchberg,  
Switzerland

## UPDATED: DEALING WITH FAQ AROUND COVID VACCINATION

**EULAR has updated its guidance to help answer patients' questions**

**COVID-19 vaccines have been shown to be safe and effective in people with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs), as well as in people receiving drugs that influence the immune system. But people with inflammatory RMDs often have specific questions and concerns around vaccination, and the different types of vaccines available. New EULAR guidance is now available to help support health professionals in dealing with patient questions, and reassuring them about vaccination.**

COVID-19 is the disease caused by infection with the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Since it emerged at the end of 2019, the virus has caused a global pandemic. Vaccination against COVID-19 has brought hope, but has also raised questions. EULAR – the European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology – formed a Task Force to help provide guidance for answering questions around vaccination. The group included patients, health professionals, and rheumatologists with experience in the field of RMDs and vaccination.

It is important to understand that all vaccines presently being used for COVID-19 are non-live. They cannot cause an infection, or change a person's genetic information. In addition, there is no evidence that vaccination is a risk to an unborn child. The available COVID-19 vaccines have been shown to be safe in people with RMDs as well as in people receiving drugs that influence the immune system. In other infectious diseases (such as influenza), non-live vaccines have been shown to work for immune-suppressed patients.

The updated EULAR viewpoints, published in *ARD, the Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases*, provide guidance for answering a selection of over 20 frequently asked questions around vaccination. These cover a range of topics, from the need for vaccination and booster doses, to the choice of vaccine, and risk of side effects and flares. The publication also summarises the approved vaccines currently available in Europe and provides advice and recommendations for managing people taking drugs that might influence the immune response to COVID-19 vaccination. It is hoped that this important work will raise awareness of vaccination in people with RMDs, and help share critical information to support decision making and prevent infections. Overall, the evidence suggests that there is no reason to withhold vaccines from people with RMDs, or those treated with drugs that influence the immune system.

*Questions around vaccination answered in the paper:*

- Do I need to be vaccinated?
- Do I need to get a third (supplemental) vaccination?
- Do I need to get a booster vaccination?
- Is one vaccine better for me than another one?
- Can I get COVID-19 and influenza vaccinations together?
- I had COVID-19 and recovered from it. Should I be vaccinated?

- Can I get the vaccination if I take antirheumatic or immunosuppressive drugs?
- Do vaccines interfere with my medication?
- Do I need to measure my antibody response after vaccination?
- Who should I consult before vaccination – my GP or my rheumatologist?
- What data are necessary to take the right decision?
- What about side effects?
- What should I do in case of a flare?
- What should I do if I have side effects that last longer than 48 hours?
- Will I need a vaccination annually as with other vaccinations, e.g., ‘flu?
- What about long-term effects?
- Am I more at risk of getting COVID-19 infection?
- Am I more at risk of getting severe COVID-19 infection?
- Do my treatments increase the risk of severe COVID-19 infection?
- Should I encourage my relatives and friends to get vaccinated?
- Am I fully protected against COVID-19 when I’m vaccinated?

**Source**

[Bijlsma JW. EULAR 2021 updated viewpoints on SARS-CoV-2 vaccination in patients with RMDs: a guidance to answer patients’ questions. Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases Published Online First: 04 February 2022. doi: 10.1136/annrheumdis-2021-221965](#)

**About EULAR**

EULAR is the European umbrella organisation representing scientific societies, health professional associations and organisations for people with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs). EULAR aims to reduce the burden of RMDs on individuals and society and to improve the treatment, prevention and rehabilitation of RMDs. To this end, EULAR fosters excellence in education and research in the field of rheumatology. It promotes the translation of research advances into daily care and fights for the recognition of the needs of people with RMDs by the EU institutions through advocacy action.

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