

COVID-19 Vaccines and Psoriatic Disease

After nearly a year living through the global pandemic, COVID-19 vaccines are now becoming available in several parts of the world. For many, this development is a hopeful sign that we are nearing the end of COVID-19 restrictions. However, for some people living with psoriatic disease, the arrival of vaccines also raises questions. Are vaccines safe for people living with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis? How will the vaccines interact with drugs that affect the immune system? IFPA and GRAPPA have put together answers to some of your most pressing questions.

Psoriatic disease is a chronic, systemic inflammatory condition with various manifestations in diverse anatomical sites, including the skin and joints. IFPA selected the term Psoriatic Disease to best encapsulate the full experience of living with psoriasis, psoriatic arthritis, and related conditions.

This article was last updated on January 15. It is a joint guidance reviewed by IFPA (International Federation of Psoriasis Associations) in collaboration with the [GRAPPA](#) (Group for Research and Assessment of Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis). We will continue to update this information as we learn more about psoriatic disease and COVID-19 vaccines. For a fully annotated version of this statement, [Click Here](#).

What should I consider when it comes to vaccines?

In many cases, people receiving drugs that affect the immune system are advised to avoid [live vaccines](#). Currently, there are several coronavirus vaccines in development and at the time of this publication only a small number of these (from Pfizer, AstraZeneca, and Moderna) are becoming available. The vaccines currently being administered are [non-live vaccines](#). In general, non-live vaccines can be given safely to people receiving drugs that affect the immune system.¹ Current recommendations, including [guidance from the International Psoriasis Council](#) (IPC), advises physicians and other health practitioners to administer COVID-19 vaccines to people with psoriatic disease unless they have specific contraindication to vaccination.^{2,3} Further studies are required to understand the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines in people who take medications that affect the immune system. The decision to be vaccinated should be an individual one, shared between you and your physician.

¹ <https://ard.bmj.com/content/79/1/39>

² <https://www.psoriasisCouncil.org/blog/IPC-Statement-on-SARS-CoV-2-Vaccines-and-Psoriasis.htm>

³ <https://www.psoriasis.org/covid-19-task-force-guidance-statements/>



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When will the vaccine be available for me?

COVID-19 vaccines will be administered based on availability, and guidance from local public health authorities. The World Health Organisation has outlined [guidance principles](#) to support national planning. These guidelines recommend that specific target groups, including health workers and at-risk groups, are considered priority groups for vaccination.⁴ Check with your local health authority to learn about the order of priority for COVID-19 vaccines in your country.

No matter where you live, people with psoriatic disease must have access to comprehensive and quality care. This includes access to COVID-19 vaccines.

Will the COVID-19 vaccine affect my psoriasis or psoriatic arthritis?

There is currently no evidence that COVID-19 vaccines have any effect on the severity of psoriasis or psoriatic arthritis.⁵ Further studies will reveal whether COVID-19 vaccines can worsen or improve symptoms of psoriatic disease. While there is currently no evidence that vaccines have an effect on symptoms, we recommend that decision making takes place together with your healthcare provider.

Is the vaccine safe and effective for people who take drugs that affect the immune system?

Any licensed vaccine must be tested rigorously before approval and assessed regularly after being introduced.⁶ Most of the COVID-19 vaccines in development are non-live vaccines (like mRNA vaccines) that do not use the live virus that causes COVID-19.⁷ Generally, non-live vaccines are safe for people who take medications that affect the immune system. Check with your health care provider to make sure you do not have any contraindications or allergies to ingredients in the vaccine.

There is still not enough evidence to predict how effective COVID-19 vaccines will be for people who take medication that affects the immune system. As COVID-19 vaccines become available, registries will collect information to give us a better understanding of their effectiveness in people taking drugs that affect the immune system.

⁴ https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/immunization/sage/covid/sage-prioritization-roadmap-covid19-vaccines.pdf?Status=Temp&sfvrsn=bf227443_2

⁵ <https://www.psoriasisCouncil.org/blog/IPC-Statement-on-SARS-CoV-2-Vaccines-and-Psoriasis.htm>

⁶ <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/how-are-vaccines-developed>

⁷ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/mrna.html>



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How can we learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine in people with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis?

We still have a lot to learn about COVID-19, vaccines against COVID-19, and psoriatic disease. Registries like PsoProtect are collecting data from health care professionals and patients to understand how COVID-19, the pandemic, and now vaccines can impact people living with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis.

If you have psoriasis, you are invited to share your experience during the pandemic with PsoProtectMe (whether you have had COVID-19 or not).

Visit psoprotectme.org.

If you are a health care provider, report cases of COVID-19 in your psoriasis patients to psoprotect.org and partner registries.

Further reading

<https://www.psoriasisCouncil.org/blog/IPC-Statement-on-SARS-CoV-2-Vaccines-and-Psoriasis.htm>

[https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-\(covid-19\)-vaccines](https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-(covid-19)-vaccines)

<https://ard.bmj.com/content/79/1/39>

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1079452>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/vaccine-benefits/facts.html#:~:text=None%20of%20the%20COVID%2D19,virus%20that%20causes%20COVID%2D19.>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-adolescents-and-youth>

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/what-you-need-to-know-covid-vaccine>