

SARS-CoV-2 Vaccination in Patients With RMDs: EULAR Viewpoints¹

Patients with inflammatory disease and those taking medications that affect the immune system may have concerns about receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. EULAR has provided guidance for making informed decisions about vaccination in patients with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs) to address their concerns.



COVID-19 and RMDs

- RMDs do not increase the risk of contracting or developing more severe cases of COVID-19
- Most RMD treatments are not associated with poorer COVID-19 outcomes except >10 mg CS daily or treatment with rituximab
- The COVID-19 vaccine is unlikely to activate RMDs



About SARS-CoV-2 vaccines

- Vaccines in use or under development are non-live and cannot cause COVID-19 or change genetic information
- Vaccines that are available or in advanced stages of development are based on mRNA, on proteins with adjuvant, and on non-replicable vectors
- Tested vaccines to date are associated with minimal side effects



Vaccinating patients with RMDs

Who can be vaccinated?

- Non-live COVID-19 vaccines can be well-tolerated in patients with RMDs and in those receiving drugs that influence the immune system
- Vaccinating patients recovering from COVID-19 is considered tolerable and may provide additional protection*



Managing vaccination and concurrent treatments

- COVID-19 vaccines should be given when the disease is in a quiet phase and before planned immunosuppression, if feasible
- Decreasing a patient's medication in preparation for COVID-19 vaccination is not advised
- COVID-19 vaccines can be administered to patients on antirheumatic or immunosuppressive drugs, with the exception of rituximab[†]



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COVID-19, coronavirus disease 2019; CS, corticosteroid; EULAR, European Alliance of Associations for Rheumatology; mRNA, messenger ribonucleic acid; RMD, rheumatic and musculoskeletal disease; SARS-CoV-2, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2.

* This information is based on knowledge available at this moment in time, realising that specific data about the performance of the emerging vaccines to COVID-19 in patients with RMDs and in patients treated with drugs that influence the immune system are not yet available.

[†] Administration of COVID-19 vaccines will depend on the timing of the last dose of rituximab.

Reference: 1. Bijlsma JWJ. *Ann Rheum Dis.* 2021;80:411-412.

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Knowledge of disease activity, possible comorbidities, and current treatment is critical for decision on COVID-19 vaccination