

1/12/2021

Dear Patients and Families,

The Center for Inherited Blood Disorders (CIBD) continues to be committed to helping our patients, families, and staff get through the current Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). COVID-19 is creating evolving challenges worldwide and here in our community. As it is a new virus, every day there is new information regarding how it spreads and how it affects different patient populations.

As more adults are getting COVID-19 infections, we are seeing more children with COVID infection now too. Therefore, it is very important that everyone in the household follow the recommendations of the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention):

- 1) Everyone should always wear a mask when they leave the house, no exceptions.
- 2) If you go out of the house, keep 6-12 feet away from other people = social distancing.
- 3) Wash your hands and use sanitizer when you touch things in public places, and always wash your hands immediately when you come home.
- 4) If exposed to someone with COVID, you should separate yourself from your family (and quarantine) for 14 days ideally.

Although the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) has granted emergency use authorization for **two mRNA vaccines against SARS-Co-V-2**, the Pfizer vaccine is authorized for people ages 16 and up whereas the Moderna vaccine is authorized for people ages 18 and up.

According to the CDC, COVID-19 vaccine may be administered to persons with underlying medical conditions, which includes our patients with bleeding disorders, clotting disorders, red cell disorders, immunodeficiency, or autoimmune diseases. However, if you have ever had a severe allergic reaction to any ingredient in a COVID-19 vaccine, you should not get that specific vaccine. If you have had a severe allergic reaction to other vaccines or injections, you should ask your doctor if you should get a COVID-19 vaccine.

If you have a bleeding disorder or are on blood thinning medication, please observe the following with vaccination:

- The vaccination is administered intra-muscularly but the smallest gauge needle needs should be used (25-27 gauge), if possible. Some vaccines must be administered using the accompanying needle-syringe combination, and so the use of an alternative needle may not be possible or desirable.
- If you are on regular factor prophylaxis, it would be preferable for you to infuse with a factor replacement product prior to or right after the vaccination and applying pressure for 10 minutes after the vaccination.
- Patients receiving emicizumab may be vaccinated by intra-muscular injection at any time without receiving an additional dose of FVIII.
- If you are not on regular factor prophylaxis, you can proceed without prior treatment if you have tolerated intra-muscular injections in the past without complications.
- Patients on anticoagulants should have prothrombin time testing performed within 72 hours prior to injection to determine international normalized ratio (INR); if results are stable and within their usual targeted range, they can be vaccinated intramuscularly.

- Following the vaccination, the area should be monitored for hematoma formation immediately for 10 minutes to reduce bleeding and swelling and by self-inspection 2-4 hours later at home to ensure that there is no delayed hematoma. You may use ice to the injection site for 15-20 min afterwards. Discomfort at the injection site is to be expected. Discomfort in the arm felt for 1-2 days after injection should not be alarming unless it worsens and is accompanied by swelling.
- All bleeding disorder patients (including Hemophilia, von Willebrand disease, rare bleeding disorders, and those with thrombocytopenia and/or platelet function disorders) can be vaccinated with precautions for this possible development of hematoma following the injection. Please consult with your hematologist if you are unsure how to proceed.

For additional information on COVID-19 vaccine safety and effectiveness, please visit:

<https://coronavirus.egovoc.com/iv-vaccine-safety-and-effectiveness> or
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>

For more information on current status of COVID-19 vaccination roll-outs in California, please visit:

<https://covid19.ca.gov/vaccines/#When-can-I-get-vaccinated>

The CDC has identified older adults and adults of any age with certain underlying medical conditions at increased risk for severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19. Many CIBD patients fall in the above higher risk groups of becoming more severely ill from COVID-19. Those patients include (but are not limited to) those affected by **Sickle Cell Disease** and other conditions which can result in **iron overload**, such as **Severe Thalassemia**, those who are overweight or obese, those who are immunocompromised, and those with heart conditions. Please visit

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html> for full details.

Patients who have a **bleeding disorder**, such as **Hemophilia** and **von Willebrand Disease**, are not noted at this time to be at increased risk for acquiring COVID-19.

To minimize complications, ALL CIBD patients must continue to be vigilant with compliance to their current treatment plans and vaccination schedules.

CIBD Clinic remains open for urgent and complex care visits. To minimize patient and staff exposure, we will be calling you closer to your currently scheduled appointment to determine if you are currently ill and advise you to seek appropriate care. We ask that you notify us if you have any potential exposure to COVID-19 for the safety of our staff prior to any in-person visits. We also will partner with you to reschedule non-urgent appointments to either a telehealth visit or to an in-person visit at a later date. Our full clinical team will alternate staff with half present in clinic and the other half working remotely to ensure we meet all of your needs.

Our CIBD Pharmacy will also remain open to ensure continuous medication supplies. Currently, the medication supplies are not affected by the outbreak.

We remain committed to serving you and your families.

Sincerely,

The CIBD Team

Please refer to our new CIBD website and these reliable websites for updates and related questions:

- OC HEALTH: General questions: COVID-19 HOTLINE (714) 834-2000, Medical questions: Health Referral Line (800) 564-8448, <https://occovid19.ochealthinfo.com/>
- For COVID-19 Testing in Orange County: <https://occovid19.ochealthinfo.com/covid-19-testing>
- For COVID-19 Testing in Los Angeles County: <https://covid19.lacounty.gov/testing/>
- For COVID-19 Testing in San Bernardino County: <https://sbccovid19.com/testing-sites/>
- CIBD - Center for Inherited Blood Disorders: <https://cibd-ca.org>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/need-to-know.html>
- National Hemophilia Foundation (NHF): <https://www.hemophilia.org>
- For additional details on vaccination specific to patients with bleeding disorders, please visit: <https://www.hemophilia.org/news/covid-19-vaccines-and-bleeding-disorders-frequently-asked-questions-faqs>
- Thalassemia: <https://thalassaemia.org.cy> and <https://thalassaemia.org.cy/news/tifs-new-leaflet-on-the-covid-19-pandemic-haemoglobin-disorders-is-now-available>
- Sickle Cell Disease: <https://www.hematology.org/covid-19/covid-19-and-sickle-cell-disease>
- Clotting disorders: <https://www.stoptheclot.org/covid-19/>

Please refer to this list of local hospitals, including CHOC, Saint Joseph Hospital, Hoag, and UCI Medical Center:

- CHOC: 1-844-GET-CHOC: <https://www.choc.org/coronavirus>
- St. Joseph: <https://coronavirus.providence.org>
- UCI: (949) 824-9918 or email covid19@uci.edu to connect directly for more information: <https://uci.edu/coronavirus>
- Hoag: <https://www.hoag.org/patients-visitors/infection-prevention/visitor-information>