

Kidney Concerns

News for Kidney Patients and Their Families

Fall 2025

Informed, Empowered, Engaged

Time To Think About Immunizations!

Immunizations are a foundational part of my staying healthy and avoiding hospitalization. Understanding vaccines and how they work is easy – your body gets a little bit but not too much of the virus or disease, develops an immune response and it's better prepared for the next viral attack. Vaccines have been around for decades and are proven safe and effective in preventing serious infection and transmitting the disease to your family and the community.

I meet with my primary physician every year and we go over the last immunization and if I'm due for a booster. Since I have a kidney transplant and I have immunosuppression, I want to be sure I can fight off anything that I come into contact with. I want to live life, be out in the community and enjoy great food, travel and shopping without worrying about coming into contact with an illness. And even if I do get sick from the illness that I come into contact with, I'm not as likely to get really sick or need to go to the hospital. That is why I get all of my shots, vaccinations and boosters that are recommended, especially in the fall when flu and Covid-19 boosters for new variants come out. It's the easiest way to stay healthy year-round.

For more on vaccine information for adults, visit the Center for Disease Control vaccine for adult's website at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines-adults/index.html>

Sincerely,

Jeff Nelson, Consumer Committee Chair



Midwest
Kidney Network

Vaccines are important to me too!

By Oliver H., Michigan

As a kidney transplant recipient, my immune system is purposely weakened by immunosuppressive medications to prevent my body from rejecting the new organ. While that's critical for protecting my transplant, it also makes me more vulnerable to infections that others might easily fight off. Yearly vaccines—like the flu shot, updated COVID vaccines, and others recommended by my healthcare provider—act as a shield, helping my body recognize and defend itself against serious viruses that could cause complications or even threaten my transplant.

These vaccinations not only reduce my risk of getting sick, but they also help avoid hospitalizations and protect those around me. Some infections, like pneumonia or hepatitis B, can be especially dangerous for people with compromised immune systems, and may lead to kidney damage or affect my overall recovery. Keeping up with my yearly shots is a proactive way to safeguard my health and make sure my transplant keeps thriving for years to come.

"I was going to a church but found it so packed that I felt I could not safely attend. We switched to another parish that had benches in the back. I felt a lot safer sequestered there. I am vaccinated however it's my feeling that no matter how safe you feel you are, the general population does not necessarily limit themselves to guard against contact with others when sick. In light of the latter, it behooves one to guard themselves by vaccination" - **Patti B., Michigan**

*"I get vaccinated to protect myself as well as others by preventing the spread of diseases. **Join me in getting vaccinated and protect our communities.**"*
- **Mary B., Wisconsin**

Make an informed decision

By Gail S., North Dakota

My situation is unique compared to most people that have CKD or other kidney issues. I have always followed all of the guidelines that were set in front of me. When COVID came along I did my research into the information that was available, which wasn't much. I ultimately decided that I needed to do everything I could to be here for the people who needed me. I chose to do the Pfizer vaccine. I had primary, secondary, and one booster.

I then was advised by my healthcare provider to decline the new vaccine; this was a relief for me. I had already decided that I was not willing to take the risk of side effects.

I am not against vaccines. I am up to date on others, pneumonia, shingles, etc. However, I really dive into the information available good, bad, and even contemplate what may not even be known. It is important to have information and data that makes sense. I do not accept sources that focus on fear tactics to achieve compliance. I believe that as patients we need to be informed and take the initiative to find the solution that is right for each of us as individuals.



Scan this code to get the facts about vax! Then ask your dialysis clinic when the flu vaccine will be available and if you're up to date with your pneumonia vaccine.