Hepatitis C and the COVID Vaccine

Should hepatitis C patients consult with a liver specialist prior to receiving the COVID vaccine?

February 18, 2021 By Connie M. Welch

Listed are general questions and answers regarding hepatitis C and receiving the COVID vaccine.

Since I have hepatitis C, am I eligible to get the COVID vaccine?

Yes. Those with hepatitis C and liver disease conditions or those who have received a liver transplant are considered to have an underlying health condition and immune-compromised, and eligible to receive the COVID vaccine regardless of age.

If I am doing treatment for hepatitis C, is it safe for me to receive the COVID vaccine?

No medical research information was given regarding those currently doing treatment for hepatitis C while receiving the COVID vaccine. It is best to consult with your liver specialist regarding your treatment and the vaccine to make sure there is no drug interaction.

If I have cirrhosis, is it safe for me to receive the COVID vaccine?

If you have cirrhosis, regardless, of it is compensated or decompensated, or post hepatitis C treatment with cirrhosis, it is regarded that you have an underlying medical condition making you eligible to receive the COVID vaccine.

Since medical studies show those with cirrhosis to be at risk for severe complications from the COVID virus, it is still recommended you receive the vaccine.

If I have decompensated cirrhosis and on the list for a liver transplant, should I get the COVID vaccine?

Studies show those with underlying health conditions and who need a liver transplant are at a higher risk of developing severe complications if they contract the COVID-19 virus. It is recommended those who are eligible to receive liver transplants receive the COVID vaccine (first and second shot) prior to a liver transplant.

For those post-liver transplant, consult with your transplant team and your liver disease specialist prior to receiving the vaccine to make sure it is safe and would not interfere with anti-rejections medications. If you are cleared by your transplant team and specialist, it is still recommended you receive the COVID vaccine as soon as possible.

How important is it that I get the COVID vaccine?

For people age 65 or older or those regardless of age with underlying health conditions such as liver disease are at higher risk of severe complications if they contract the COVID-19 virus. It is recommended you receive the COVID-vaccine for maximum protection. Consult with your liver specialist for your specific health and liver condition regarding the vaccine.

Where can I get the COVID vaccine?

Contact your state or local health department for information on signing up to receive the COVID vaccine. Talk to your health care provider for more information.

The CDC also has a Vaccine Finder to help you, https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/reporting/vaccinefinder.html

In Summary

It is highly recommended you consult with your liver specialist about your liver and health condition prior to receiving the COVID vaccine.

Since the COVID virus is more contagious than regular flu, safety precautions are recommended.

- Wear face masks when around people
- Wash hands often
- Use alcohol-based hand-sanitizer often
- Practice social distancing

Strengthen Your Immune System

- Receive the annual flu shot and if age or health condition eligible, receive the pneumonia shot
- Receive the Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccine. Note: there is no vaccine for hepatitis C. Use safety precautions regarding possible exposure to hepatitis C.

Do you have a question or concern about the COVID vaccine in relation to hepatitis C?

Share your comments below.

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