



SARS-CoV-2 Vaccination for patients with Systemic Lupus Erythematosus

Image: CDC

Questions

Answers

I have SLE,
is my risk of severe COVID19 increased?

Although no definitive data are available yet, **the risk of severe COVID19 may be increased in SLE patients**, especially in those taking corticoids, immunosuppressants and biological agents such as rituximab.

I have SLE,
shall I get vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2?

Although no data about the efficacy and tolerance of SARS-CoV-2 vaccines are available yet for SLE patients, as well as in pregnant or breastfeeding women, **the risk for severe COVID19 is expected to be much higher than the risk for side effects from vaccination** in the context of the pandemic, especially if you are treated with corticoids, immunosuppressants and biological agents such as rituximab.

I have SLE,
is taking hydroxychloroquine
not enough to protect me against COVID19?

All lupus patients should receive antimalarials such as hydroxychloroquine (unless contraindicated) due to their many beneficial effects in SLE. There is increasing evidence that **HCQ is not effective to prevent or treat COVID19 infection**.

I have SLE,
is there a risk of lupus flare
following SARS-CoV-2 vaccination?

We have no data with SARS-CoV-2 vaccines yet. However, based on evidence from other vaccines (e.g. influenza, pneumococcal) there is no expected increase in the risk of lupus flare with SARS-CoV-2 vaccines in patients with inactive disease.

I have SLE and I am going to start an
immunosuppressive treatment. Will my immune
system be able to respond to SARS-CoV-2 vaccine?

Vaccination should be considered prior to immunosuppressive treatment initiation (Ideally, start of immunosuppressive treatments at least 2 weeks after the last dose of SARS-CoV-2 vaccine) whenever feasible. It is important to discuss the timing of vaccination and start of immunosuppressive treatment with your doctor.

I have SLE and I am taking immunosuppressants,
is it possible to get the COVID19 as a side effect of
the SARS-CoV-2 vaccination?

No, due to their mechanism of action **SARS-CoV-2 vaccines currently licensed in Europe cannot induce a COVID19 infection**.

I have SLE and I am planning to get vaccinated,
Shall I stop my lupus treatment for a few weeks to
improve vaccine efficacy?

Treatment discontinuation or a decrease in medication dosage should be avoided since this may increase the risk of lupus flare.

I have SLE,
can I get only 1 shot of the SARS-CoV-2 vaccines for
which 2 shots are needed (Pfizer/BioNtech and Moderna)

Preliminary data from the general population suggest **decreased protection** against COVID19 for individuals having received one instead of two shots (for vaccines for which 2 shots are needed)

I have SLE
and I just got vaccinated, do I still need to wear
a face mask and do social distancing?

The efficacy of SARS-CoV-2 vaccines in SLE patients is likely to be decreased in patients on immunosuppressive treatment compared to the general population. Hence, you should still **wear a face mask and do social distancing** until we know more about vaccine efficacy in SLE.