

Answering 12 COVID-19 Questions: Part 3



No one has to face MS alone. The National MS Society is here to be your supportive partner and continues to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic to provide everyone affected by MS the information you need to live your best life.

The National MS Society convened a group of MS experts to develop recommendations regarding the COVID-19 vaccine and those living with MS. We're answering your top questions.

Vaccine Recommendations

How were vaccine recommendations developed for the MS community?

Guidance is based on data from clinical trials and studies of other vaccines administered to people living with MS. While data specifically regarding people living with MS and the COVID-19 vaccine is not yet available, we continue to update our guidance and monitor studies as more information becomes available.

Who developed the vaccine recommendations?

The National MS Society brought together a diverse group of MS experts and organizations across North America. The recommendations are endorsed the Consortium of MS Centers, the MS Coalition and other MS organizations.

Which vaccine is recommended for those living with MS?

Both of the current FDA authorized vaccines - The Pfizer BioNTech and Moderna - are safe for people with MS and to use with disease modifying therapies (DMTs).

Should I get the vaccine?

All of us have a personal responsibility to slow the spread of the pandemic and eliminate the virus as quickly as possible. Talk with your MS healthcare team about specific concerns.

Effects of COVID-19 Vaccine

Will the vaccine trigger an MS relapse?

The vaccines are not likely to trigger an MS relapse or to worsen your chronic MS symptoms.

Will the vaccine give me COVID-19?

The vaccines do not contain live virus and will not cause COVID-19 disease.

What are the side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine?

Any vaccine can cause side effects, including a fever, which can make your MS symptoms worse temporarily. However, your symptoms should subside once your fever is gone.

COVID-19 Vaccine and MS Medications

Is it safe to take my MS medication and get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Based on previous data on vaccines and DMTs, we believe it is safe to get this vaccine while on medication.

Will my DMT affect the efficacy of the vaccine?

Most DMTs will not affect the vaccine's efficacy – however, some may make the vaccine less effective, and it may be best to coordinate the timing of getting the vaccine to get the best results.

[Visit our webpage for full recommendations](#) for timing of these DMTs with the COVID-19 vaccine. As well, listen to the RealTalk MS segment below:

[Episode 180: Dr. Jaime Imitola Explains Timing Your MS Medications with Both COVID-19 mRNA Vaccines](#)

I take one of those DMTs listed above and cannot adjust when I get my treatment - what do I do about the vaccine?

Always work with your MS healthcare provider to determine what is best for you in your MS care. Evaluate your risk of COVID-19, including your occupation, where you live and the current state of your MS.

If the risk of your MS worsening outweighs your risk of COVID-19, do not alter your DMT schedule and get the vaccine when it is available to you.

Additional Help

Where can I find more information, resources and support?

The National MS Society is here for you!

- Contact an [MS Navigator](#) for help finding resources
- Check out our [Ask an MS Expert](#) series to learn more about vaccine recommendations, managing stress and more
- Visit our [Coronavirus Resources Page](#) to find the latest information

Is there anything else I can do to help slow the spread of the virus besides getting the vaccine?

Even if you get the COVID-19 vaccine, it is important to maintain many of measures we know will help slow the spread. This includes:

- Wear a mask/facial covering
- Avoid crowds
- Maintain social distancing
- Wash your hands frequently

We will get through this together. Together, we are stronger.

Editor's Note: Read [part 1](#) and [part 2](#) of answering your questions about COVID-19.