

My COVID-19 Vaccine Experience



My husband would tell you that I can occasionally be a worst-case scenario kind of gal. My mind can create some pretty horrible, albeit unlikely scenarios. Part of this is just innately who I am, but it is also in large part because I have been an ICU nurse since 2010.

When my husband and I were engaged, I spent an hour going through scenarios where I would need him to “pull the plug” so to speak. He told me he needed a break after about two “what-ifs.” I’ve taken care of too many worst-case scenarios to count. So, the worry that came with starting a much stronger DMT in the middle of a pandemic while working as a nurse was at times fairly daunting.

At work, I have occasionally taken care of some COVID-19 positive patients but have been able to remain safe with all the PPE provided. Originally my neurologist wanted me to not work at all while on Ocrevus, but that wasn’t something I would even consider. COVID is not going anywhere anytime soon, so we agreed I would continue working and just be as careful as possible. Then November came with promises of vaccinations on the horizon, and with that came hope but also more questions for those of us with MS. Are we eligible? And if we get it, will it even be effective?

Fast forward to mid-December, the hospital I work for was beginning to offer vaccinations to its employees. I reached out to my neurologist to see what her advice was. Honestly, the response I got was a little frustrating but fair. It was essentially, “we don’t know, maybe later we will have recommendations.”

Until recently, there was not a lot of evidence-based practice regarding these vaccines for people with MS. So, I did what so many of us do and attempted some research on my own. I looked on the Ocrevus Facebook group and found that some neurologists did have recommendations for their patients. The timing of when I was offered the vaccine really worked for when my next infusion was scheduled. I decided to get it and let the chips fall where they may.

I got the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine and the second dose seventeen days apart. I was warned the second dose could have worse side effects, but I only had a sore arm and body aches the second day post vaccine. It was nothing a little ibuprofen couldn't take care of.

I realize that doing this without a lot of recommendations could have been a bad idea, but I truly feel like it was the best decision for me. In this pandemic, the unknowns have forced us to make decisions without really having any quality evidence to back them up.

Now, we thankfully know that [**it is recommended for people with MS to receive the vaccine**](#). I'm now on the other side of receiving mine and happy to report the relief I feel going to work or even the grocery store. I'm so thankful and truly believe we will begin to see a turning point in this pandemic because of these vaccinations in the coming months. We have all needed a glimmer of hope from the havoc COVID has created - even those who think of the worst-case scenarios.

Editor's Note: Read the latest vaccine recommendations on the [**National MS Society website**](#).

For the latest information and resources related to COVID-19, please visit the [**Society's Coronavirus Resources Page**](#). Find additional resources through our [**Ask an MS Expert webinar series**](#).

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