

Advanced Rheumatology of Houston

COVID-19 Vaccine Frequently Asked Questions

Will the providers in your office be vaccinated for COVID-19?

Yes! Both providers and most of our staff have been vaccinated with the first round of injections. With the exception of mild symptoms, no issues have been reported.

I am on medications that suppress my immune system to treat my autoimmune condition. Can I take the vaccine?

Yes, with the following considerations:

If you are taking medications that suppress your immune system, your immune system might not produce as many antibodies to the virus, and therefore, might not work as well.

We recommend holding your medications for 2 weeks after receiving the **INITIAL** vaccine to allow your immune system to develop a proper response. If you are receiving infusion medications, please contact our office to discuss scheduling your infusion around your vaccination. There is no need to hold your medications after the second dose of the vaccine.

All vaccines have additives which your body can see as a foreign substance and may trigger your immune system. With autoimmune disorders, vaccine additives can potentially cause your symptoms to worsen for short period of time after receiving the vaccine. If this happens, please contact our office.

What medications should I consider holding after receiving the vaccination?

The following DMARDs: Methotrexate, Leflunomide (Arava), Azathioprine (Imuran), Mycophenolate Mofetil (Cellcept)

Hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil) and Sulfasalazine do NOT need to be held.

All injectable/infusion medications including:

TNF inhibitors: Humira, Enbrel, Simponi, Cimzia, Remicade

JAK inhibitors: Xeljanz, Rinvoq, Olumiant

B-cell inhibitor: Benlysta

Costimulation modulators: Orencia

IL-6 inhibitors: Actemra, Kevzara

IL-17 inhibitors: Cosentyx, Stelara, Taltz

IL-23 Inhibitors: Tremfya

For all Rituxan infusions, our office will be in contact with you regarding your infusion schedule as this will have to be carefully timed.

Will your office be distributing the COVID-19 vaccination?

We will most likely not be distributing the vaccine, at least not initially. Please see below for recommended resources regarding vaccination distribution:

List of providers/locations currently offering the vaccine to healthcare workers, individuals over 65, and those with chronic illnesses:

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/immunize/vaccine-hubs.aspx>

For more information regarding COVID-19 and vaccine distribution, please visit this website Texas Department of Health: www.dshs.texas.gov

Most urgent care, HEB, CVS, and Walgreens locations have online information on their websites regarding vaccine distribution. We recommend signing up on these lists as soon as possible to be considered in the earliest phases.