



Patient Immunization Handout

Patients with cancer are at increased risk for vaccine-preventable diseases compared with the general population not only due to their cancer, but also as a result of the effects of cancer treatments. For example, cancer patients receiving chemotherapy have a greater risk of getting the flu and have an increased risk for flu-related complications and higher flu-related death compared with the general population. In addition, cancer patients who get the flu during treatments may need to delay or stop chemotherapy or radiation treatments until they recover from influenza.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) provide recommendations for routine immunizations each year for children and adults. In addition, recommendations are made for persons based on medical conditions. Talk with your doctor about the following vaccines to be sure that you are protected from vaccine-preventable diseases. [Note that patients who receive a hematopoietic cell transplant (HCT or bone marrow transplant) need more vaccines than patients with solid tumors. If you are having HCT, talk with your City of Hope health care team about the vaccination schedule that applies to you.]

Influenza Vaccine

- All cancer patients should get a flu shot each year
- There are several different kinds of flu vaccines. Cancer patients should only get a flu shot (NOT the intranasal spray)
- If cancer patients will be undergoing chemotherapy, flu shots are usually given at least 2 weeks prior to the start of chemotherapy or between cycles of chemotherapy (you and your doctor can discuss what is best for your situation)
- Check the box below that applies to you:
 - ☐ I already received a flu shot this year
 - ☐ I need to talk with my City of Hope health care team about a flu shot

Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccine (this hard-to-say vaccine is shortened to "PPSV23")—Some people call this a "pneumonia shot"

- The bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae* can cause a variety of very serious infections. The pneumococcal vaccine (PPSV23 or "pneumonia shot") can help to protect against the infections caused by this bacteria
- Cancer patients who have not had a PPSV23 shot before should be vaccinated
- If cancer patients will be undergoing chemotherapy or other cancer treatment, they should receive PPSV23 at least 2 weeks before treatments. PPSV23 during chemotherapy or radiation therapy should be avoided (if you need a PPSV23 vaccine, you and your doctor can discuss what the best timing for your situation is)
- A second dose of PPSV23 is recommended 5 years after the first dose (if you are over the age of 65 when you get your first dose of PPSV23, you will only need 1 dose)
- Check the box below that applies to you:
 - ☐ I already received PPSV23
 - ☐ I need to check with my primary care doctor about whether I received PPSV23
 - ☐ I need to talk with my City of Hope health care team about PPSV23

Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Acellular Pertussis Vaccine (Td/Tdap)

- A tetanus shot (Td) is recommended for all adults every 10 years. The CDC/ACIP now recommends a one-time Tdap vaccine for all adults younger than 65 years who have not received Tdap before (this is to help prevent the spread of pertussis [whooping cough] to babies too young to be vaccinated)
- If you need a Td or Tdap shot, you and your doctor can discuss the best timing to get the vaccine based on your situation
- Check the box below that applies to you:
 - ☐ I already received a Tdap shot
 - ☐ I need to check with my primary care doctor about whether I received Td or Tdap vaccines
 - ☐ I need to talk with my City of Hope health care team about Td/Tdap

Zoster (Shingles) Vaccine

- The virus that causes chicken pox can become active later in life and cause herpes zoster or shingles, which is a rash that can be associated with long-lasting and sometimes awful pain. Half of all cases of shingles occur in those over the age of 60 years
- The number of people who get shingles is higher in those who have problems with their immune system, including people with cancer
- The shingles vaccine is not given to people with acquired immunodeficiency (such as from chemotherapy) and is not given at City of Hope
- If you are over the age of 60, it is important to talk with your health care team at City of Hope about your risk for shingles, and when and if it would be right for you to get the shingles vaccine
- Check the box below that applies to you:
 - ☐ This does not apply to me (I am younger than age 60)
 - ☐ I already received a shingles vaccine
 - ☐ I need to talk with my City of Hope health care team about the shingles vaccine

Many patients have questions about vaccine-preventable diseases, vaccines, and vaccine safety. It is important to understand that vaccines are among the most thoroughly tested medical products. Clinical development of vaccines is an extensive, highly-regulated process. The following is a list of trusted sources of information about vaccines, vaccine safety, and vaccine-preventable diseases:

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Vaccines & Immunizations: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/default.htm

CDC Vaccine Safety: What You Should Know www.cdc.gov/Features/VaccineSafety/

The Immunization Action Coalition: www.vaccineinformation.org/

National Network for Immunization Information (NNII): www.immunizationinfo.org

Vaccine Education Center at CHOP: www.vaccine.chop.edu

TCH Center for Vaccine Awareness and Research: www.texaschildrens.org/Locate/Departments-and-Services/Vaccine/