

Guide to vaccinations for the immunosuppressed patient

If your immune system is suppressed because of the medicines you are taking, you must avoid live vaccines.

Immunosuppressed patients can safely receive the following vaccinations (which are not live):

- Polio (ONLY inactivated named-patient product from RFH pharmacy)
- Cholera
- Diphtheria
- Haemophilus influenza (Hib)
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Mantoux test
- Meningococcal A
- Meningococcal C
- Rabies
- Tetanus
- Typhoid (injection)
- Typhoid/Hep A combination (injection)
- Pertussis
- Pneumococcal
- Influenza

Immunosuppressed patients should not receive the following vaccines (because they are live):

- BCG
- Polio (oral)
- Yellow fever
- Typhoid (oral)
- MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)

Vaccination should always be postponed if the patient is suffering from an acute illness but does not need to be for a minor infection without a fever.

Please note

- 1) The response to all vaccines may be decreased in immunosuppressed patients, especially mantoux tests.
- 2) Live vaccine should be postponed for three months after stopping steroids and six months after chemotherapy.
- 3) Bone marrow transplant patients: six months after transplant check immunity and vaccinate as appropriate with diphtheria, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella and HIB.

- 4) Patients prescribed immunoglobulins (eg octagam) receive a range of different antibodies from these products and therefore can be given live vaccines. However the vaccine should be administered three weeks before or three months after immunoglobulin infusion. Live vaccines are likely to be ineffective if given at the time of immunoglobulin infusion, except yellow fever (it is unlikely that there are significant amounts of yellow fever antibodies in immunoglobulins).
- 5) After live vaccines, viruses may be excreted for longer periods of time in immunosuppressed patients than in normal patients – patients may wish to warn their contacts.
- 6) Egg hypersensitivity is only a problem with yellow fever and influenza vaccines. In these cases a skin test should be carried out before administration of the vaccine.

Vaccine products

Live (attenuated):	Polio (oral) Measles Mumps Rubella BCG Yellow fever Typhoid (oral) MMR (combined vaccine)
Inactivated:	Pertussis Whole cell typhoid (injection) Polio (injection) Meningococcal A Meningococcal C Rabies Hepatitis A and B Influenza
Toxoids (inactivated):	Diphtheria Tetanus
Polysaccharide (inactivated):	Pneumococcal

For more information contact the pharmacy drug helpline on 020 7830 2983.