COVID-19 Vaccination of Individuals with a Bleeding Disorder

Sheffield Haemophilia Centre, Royal Hallamshire Hospital
January 2021
COVID-19 vaccinations have begun rolling out across the UK. This leaflet aims to answer some common questions about the vaccine.

**Can I have the vaccine if I have a bleeding disorder?**
Yes. There is no evidence of complications between your condition, its treatment, and the COVID-19 vaccination.

**Can I still have the vaccine if I have HIV or Hepatitis?**
Yes. There is no evidence that the vaccine will cause harm if you have either of these conditions.

**I am on steroids or another immunosuppressant medication related to my diagnosis. Can I have the vaccine?**
Yes. The COVID-19 vaccine can be given to those on steroids and other immunosuppressant medications.

**When will I receive the vaccine?**
There is no evidence to suggest that individuals with bleeding disorders are at a greater risk of contracting COVID-19 or any of the associated complications compared to the general population.

Therefore, individuals with bleeding disorders are not considered a priority group and you will be contacted to attend one of the hospital hubs or community sites when you are eligible relating to the priority criteria including age and other underlying conditions.

**How is the COVID-19 vaccine given?**
In the past you may have been advised to have similar vaccinations, such as the yearly flu vaccine, as a deep subcutaneous injection (an injection into the fatty tissue of your arm or stomach).
Vaccines for COVID-19 can only be given intramuscularly (into the muscle in your upper arm). This means the bleed risk is greater so we are recommending the following advice:

- Where possible, a smaller needle is used to give the vaccine, such as a 23 or 25 gauge needle.
- Firm pressure is applied to the area after your injection for at least 2 minutes. Rubbing the area should be avoided.
- You may find it useful to ice the area afterwards for 10 minute periods.

Further precautions may be advised depending on your condition and can be found below.

**I have severe/moderate bleeding disorders (severe/moderate haemophilia, type 3 vWd, severe FX deficiency)**

We suggest you take your prophylaxis before your vaccination.

If you do not routinely give yourself factor, please get in contact with the centre for advice.

**I am on emicizumab (Hemlibra). Can I still have the COVID vaccine?**

Yes. No complications have been found between emicizumab (Hemlibra) and the COVID-19 vaccine.

You do not need any additional factor concentrate on the day of your vaccine.

**I have mild haemophilia or other factor deficiency**

You do not need any factor concentrate before vaccination. Please follow general precautions.

**I have Type 1/Type 2 Von Willebrands disease**

You may have had treatment before medical procedures in the past like desmopressin (DDAVP) or factor concentrate.

For the COVID-19 vaccine, this is not necessary and you can have the vaccine following the general precautions.
I have ITP/Thrombocytopenia/TTP
When you have the COVID-19 vaccine will depend on your platelet count and if you have a history of bleeding.

Most people who have well controlled ITP/Thrombocytopenia/TTP (eg platelet count over 30) are able to have the vaccine following the general precautions. Contact the centre for further advice if you are unsure.

My bleeding disorder isn’t mentioned here.
General precautions should be followed by patients with any other conditions not mentioned here. If you have any further questions though please contact the centre to speak to someone about your condition and any concerns you have.

After your injection
For many people having the vaccination they will experience bruising or local reactions, however, following your injection it is important to observe the area for any excessive bruising, swelling or pain at the site of injection. Please contact the centre to advise if this does occur or you are concerned.

If you have concerns, ring the centre for advice on 0114 2713211 or email us at sth.haemophiliacentre@nhs.net. The centre is open between 08:00 and 17:00 Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays.

Out of hours, you can contact an on-call haematologist via switchboard by calling 0114 2711900 and speaking to an operator.