

Vaccines and Patients with Rheumatic & Musculoskeletal Diseases

The American College of Rheumatology (ACR) has released new guidelines on vaccinations in patients with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs). RMDs, such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus, can affect the immune system and make individuals more susceptible to infections.

These guidelines provide important recommendations on the types of vaccinations that are safe and effective for individuals with these conditions.

Vaccines are Safe & Effective

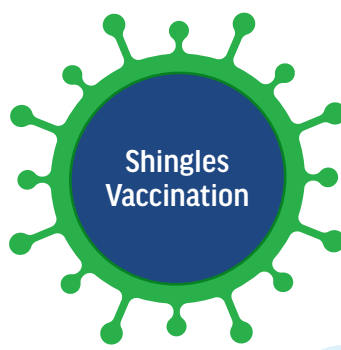
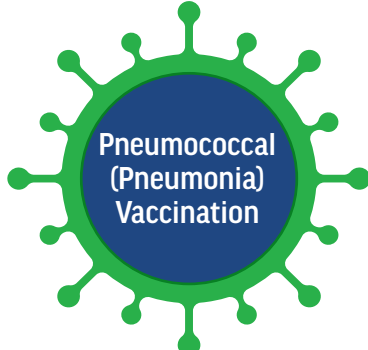
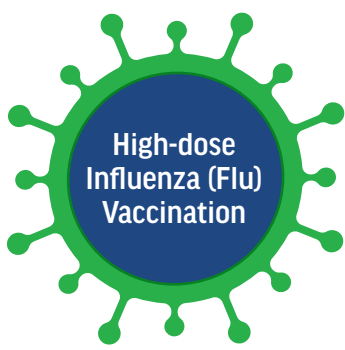
ACR recommends scheduled vaccinations for rheumatic disease patients. Vaccinations are important for overall health, and patients with RMDs have a higher risk for complications from infectious diseases. **With a few rare exceptions, most vaccinations are safe.**

Multiple vaccines can be given on the same day if they are recommended, but many patients still prefer to space them out.



Recommended Vaccines

For adults on immune-suppressing medications, ACR recommends:

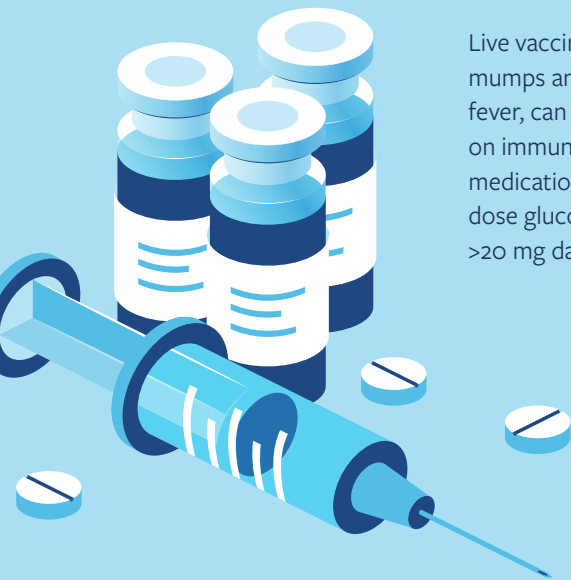


Things to Consider



Vaccines are unlikely to cause flare-ups.

Live vaccinations, like those given for measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), varicella and yellow fever, can sometimes make you sick if you're on immune-suppressing medications. Some medications, for example rituximab and high-dose glucocorticoids (e.g. prednisone >20 mg daily), can make vaccines less effective.



Not taking methotrexate for two weeks after the flu shot will make the vaccine more effective. But you should only do this if your disease is under control. Talk to your rheumatologist first.

Consult Your Rheumatology Healthcare Team

A vaccination strategy should always be shared between a rheumatology health care provider and a patient or their caregiver. Special monitoring should be given to children on immune-suppressing medications, or babies whose mothers were on those medications during pregnancy.

By following these guidelines, patients can help protect themselves against serious infection and illness.