

**metoject®/metex® AND
COVID-19 VACCINATION**
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

medac

Sources:

¹ International Psoriasis Council: <https://www.psoriasis-council.org/blog/IPC-Statement-on-SARS-CoV-2-Vaccines-and-Psoriasis.htm>

² Psoriasis Association, UK: <https://www.psoriasis-association.org.uk/news/covid-19-vaccine-and-psoriasis>

³ www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines

DEAR PATIENT,

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, caused by infection with the SARS-CoV-2 virus, has an impact on our life, and therefore on the life of people with psoriasis. With the recently developed vaccines, some more questions come to mind. People with psoriasis and those being treated with medicines in particular may be wondering about the effect the vaccination might have on their immune system.

The International Psoriasis Council¹, and patient organisations like the UK Psoriasis Association², addressed these topics. The answers provided below are based on the knowledge available at this moment in time. Over the coming months,

more information will be collected. When you read on, please bear in mind that this text will need to be updated whenever new information becomes available.

First of all, COVID-19 vaccines provide the best protection against coronavirus. Various types of vaccines are being used in national vaccination programmes, such as the mRNA-based vaccines by Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech, as well as the viral vector vaccine by AstraZeneca. More vaccines are still under development. All vaccines are non-live vaccines that cannot give you the viral disease, and cannot transfer infection to you.

FAQ BY PATIENTS

Can people with psoriasis or psoriatic arthritis be given a COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. The current data suggests that the mRNA-based vaccines by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna and the non-replicable vector-based vaccine by AstraZeneca are all suitable for people with psoriasis or psoriatic arthritis. That means that having psoriasis or psoriatic arthritis and taking the prescribed medicines for your condition will not affect whether or not you can receive the COVID-19 vaccine, or which vaccine is best for you.

Will the COVID-19 vaccine make my psoriasis worse?

There is no evidence to suggest that vaccines will affect psoriasis or cause a flare. Please remember that people with psoriasis are encouraged to have a flu vaccine shot each year. At the moment, scientists can see no reason why the COVID-19

vaccine would be any different in terms of flaring from, e.g., the flu vaccine. Systematic analyses have not found evidence that (non-live) vaccines are bad for psoriasis.

Can people with psoriasis taking medicines affecting the immune system safely receive a COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes. The Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccines are all considered suitable for people with psoriasis or psoriatic arthritis, regardless of whether or not they are receiving medicines that affect the immune system, such as methotrexate and biologic agent injections.

Please note that people who are taking medicines which affect the immune system should not receive live („attenuated“) vaccines. Non-live vaccines such as Pfizer-BioNTech, AstraZeneca and Moderna vaccines can generally be given safely to

people taking medicines that affect the immune system, for example methotrexate and biologic agent injections. Further studies are needed to learn exactly how well the vaccines work in the context of these medications.

Is a COVID-19 vaccine going to be effective in people who are taking medicines that affect the immune system?

For the moment it is not yet known if receiving an immune-modulatory medication such as methotrexate or biologic agent injections reduces the effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines. So far trials have not included people taking medicines that affect the immune system. That means the vaccine's efficacy in this group of people still needs to be established. Nevertheless, even if the response to the vaccine may be reduced or delayed, it is still better than none. Thus you are very much encouraged

to get a vaccination if you are taking medications influencing the immune system.

Should I stop or delay my medication before vaccination?

The relevant medical societies do not advise that you stop or delay taking medicines affecting the immune system like methotrexate or biologic agent injections before receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

Having said that, there may be situations where your doctor might advise to reduce or pause your treatment. For example, if your risk of COVID-19 is high and your psoriasis or psoriatic arthritis is well under control. This should be discussed with your doctor on an individual basis. It is important that you do not stop any treatments without first discussing this with your doctor.

Is it okay for me to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, if I start taking medication for the first time?

Yes, in fact your doctor might offer you the COVID-19 vaccination before you start your treatment to give your immune system enough time to respond to the vaccine. If possible, it would be good to have the two-dose vaccination schedule completed before starting medication. Your doctor will discuss this with you.

How do the different vaccines work?³

Vaccines help your body's natural defenses, your immune system, so your body will be ready to fight the virus. This is also called immunity. Other measures also help stop the spread of COVID-19, such as wearing a mask that covers your nose

and mouth, washing your hands often and keeping a safe distance from other people you do not live with.

The vaccination may cause side effects in some people, like sore muscles, feeling tired, or a mild fever. These reactions mean the vaccine is working to help teach your body how to fight COVID-19 if you are exposed. Usually, the side effects will last no longer than a day or two. Having these types of side effects does NOT mean that you have COVID-19.

If you have questions about your health after your shot, call your doctor, nurse, or clinic.

The illustration below shows how these vaccines help the immune system form protective antibodies.

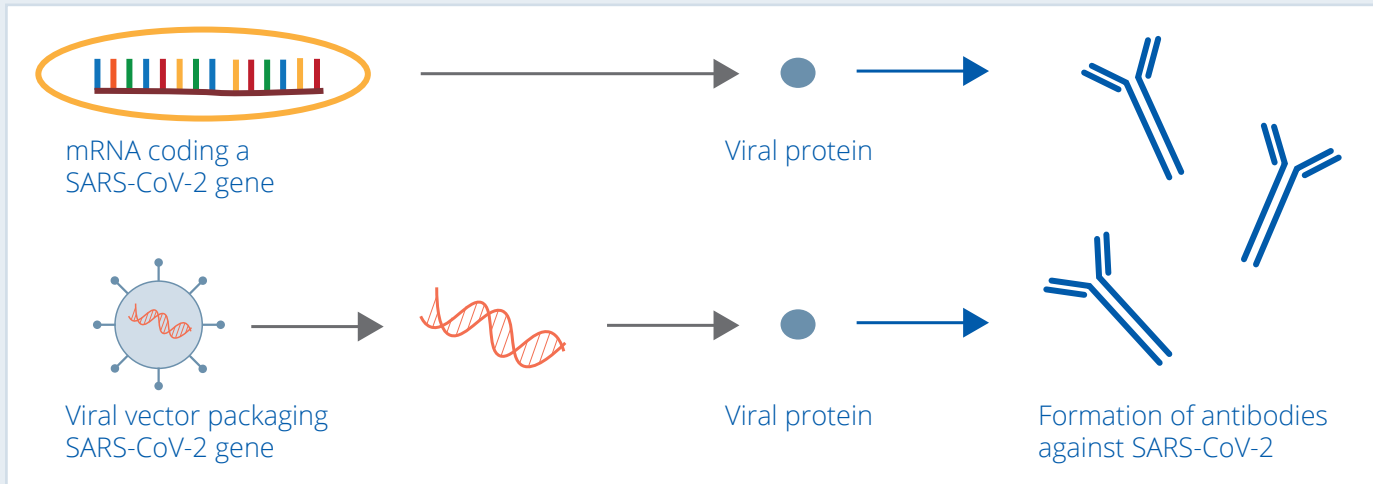


Figure 1: The top part shows the principle of using mRNA-based vaccines like Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech. The comb-like structure is the mRNA that encodes the spike protein of SARS-CoV-2. It is protected in a lipid nanoparticle, like a soap bubble. Once adsorbed by a human cell, the viral spike proteins are produced. These spike proteins trigger the formation of protective antibodies against SARS-CoV-2, and hence against COVID-19 infection.

The lower part illustrates the principle of using non-replicable viral vectors as in the AstraZeneca vaccine. Here, the double-stranded DNA that encodes the spike protein is protected in a non-replicable virus. The virus functions as a vector and delivers the DNA into the cell. Here, the viral spike proteins are produced, and trigger the formation of protective antibodies.