



10th June 2021

Dear Member,

Covid vaccination for cancer patients

The UK wide vaccination program for COVID-19 has been an overwhelming success. Over 50% of people aged over 18 in UK have now received the second dose of the COVID19 vaccine and it is likely that most of our vulnerable cancer patients have received both doses too. However, some clinicians have raised concerns that there are still cancer patients waiting to receive their second dose. We have taken this up with JCVI and we have had recent communication from Professor Wei Shen Lim, Chair of the COVID-9 JCVI, reassuring clinicians that we (specialists) can request for the second dose to be brought forward if required.

Currently in the UK, based on JCVI advice, the second dose of all vaccines is routinely scheduled between four and 12 weeks after the first dose for the Pfizer vaccine and 8 to 12 weeks for the AstraZeneca vaccine. Recently in areas with a high number of B.1.617.2 variant cases the second dose is being brought forward to 8 weeks.

In the immunosuppression and HIV section of the Green Book chapter 14a (page 18) the guidance is that '*specialists may advise their patients based on their knowledge and understanding of their immune status and likely immune response to vaccination but should also consider the risk from COVID-19 and the patient's likelihood of exposure.*' This highlights that there is some clinical flexibility in the schedule for the immunosuppressed which we may use while advising our patients.

We hope this will be helpful to those clinicians who are struggling to get their patients their second dose.

Yours sincerely,

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