

## Matters related to COVID-19 Vaccination in Breast Cancer Patients

The Hong Kong Breast Cancer Foundation (HKBCF) recently receives growing public inquiries about COVID-19 vaccination in breast cancer patients. Hence, the HKBCF consulted the opinions of the Advisory Panel on COVID-19 Vaccines (“the Panel”). Reply and the latest information on the COVID-19 vaccines authorised for use in Hong Kong were received.

Below are the links to the relevant fact sheets.

Vaccination Fact Sheet for CoronaVac <a href="https://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/pdf/COVID19VaccinationFactSheet_CoronaVac_ENG.pdf">https://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/pdf/COVID19VaccinationFactSheet_CoronaVac_ENG.pdf</a>	Vaccination Fact Sheet for Comirnaty <a href="https://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/pdf/COVID19VaccinationFactSheet_Comirnaty_ENG.pdf">https://www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/pdf/COVID19VaccinationFactSheet_Comirnaty_ENG.pdf</a>
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### For breast cancer patients under treatment

There have been concerns that some cancer treatments (chemotherapy, radiation, or immunotherapy) can affect the immune system, which might render the vaccine less effective. However, there are so far no studies done on the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines on people with suppressed immune systems.

If in doubt, breast cancer patients should always seek the views of their attending doctors and evaluate the benefits and risks of vaccination according to their situation, before taking vaccination.

### For breast cancer patients and survivors with lymphoedema

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), some people might experience swelling or tenderness of the lymph nodes under the arm in which they got the COVID-19 vaccine injection. This is often a normal response by the body’s immune system, which is getting ready to fight a future COVID-19 infection.

ACS recommends people with breast cancer or a history of breast cancer should consider getting the injection in the arm on the opposite side of their breast cancer. E.g. if the breast cancer/breast surgery was in the left breast, it is probably best to get the injection in the right arm.

Reference:

<https://www.cancer.org/treatment/treatments-and-side-effects/physical-side-effects/low-blood-counts/infections/covid-19-vaccines-in-people-with-cancer.html>

### For women who wishes to undertake mammogram

There have been reports overseas that a swollen lymph node after vaccination may be mistaken for signs of breast cancer.

The Society of Breast Imaging (SBI) recommends that “if possible, and when it does not

unduly delay care, (people should) consider scheduling screening exams prior to the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccination or 4-6 weeks following the second dose of a COVID-19 vaccination.”

Reference:

<https://www.sbi-online.org/Portals/0/Position%20Statements/2021/SBI-recommendations-for-managing-axillary-adenopathy-post-COVID-vaccination.pdf>

### **Other resources**

Apart from the above information, breast cancer patients may also refer to the below researches and guidelines on COVID-19 vaccines published overseas.

National Comprehensive Cancer Network's COVID-19 Resources for the Cancer Care Community (English only)

<https://www.nccn.org/covid-19/>

European Society for Medical Oncology's Statements on COVID-19 Vaccination in Cancer Patients (English only)

<https://www.esmo.org/covid-19-and-cancer/covid-19-vaccination>

Macmillan Cancer Support (English only)

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/coronavirus/vaccine>