**\*\*WHO NEEDS AN EXTRA DOSE OF THE COVID VACCINE?**

Patients that have immune systems that are moderately or severely compromised. These patients are more likely to become severely ill, have an increased risk for prolonged infection and shedding of the Covid virus putting others at risk, and they have lower antibody titers suggesting they will not mount an adequate response when they are exposed to the virus. Because of this they are more likely to transmit the virus to household contacts.

An extra vaccine is NOT a booster. A booster dose is one that is given after the response to a vaccine wanes, an example of this is a tetanus booster that is required every 10 years. We will all eventually need a Covid booster but when we will need it is not known, this is currently being evaluated by the CDC but is NOT recommended at this time. Age does not appear to be a recommendation for a 3rd booster at this time.

Recommendations for people who are immune compromised:

1. A third dose is recommended at least 28 days after the 2nd dose of the initial series. It should be the same brand as the 1st two doses if possible, i.e. if you had 2 Pfizer vaccines you should get a 3rd Pfizer vaccine
2. Currently we do not have enough information to recommend a 2nd dose of the J and J vaccine. Both the CDC and FDA are evaluating this vaccine for a 3rd dose
3. At this time there is no reason to have antibody levels checked. We do not know what the results mean and it would not change our recommendation for the 3rd vaccine for those patients at risk

**PATIENTS THAT QUALIFY FOR A 3RD VACCINE:**

1. Active treatment for solid tumor cancers or blood malignancies such as leukemia or lymphoma, consult your oncologist if you have any concerns about whether or not you should get a 3rd dose
2. Solid organ transplant, such as kidney or heart, currently on immunosuppressive therapy
3. History of Stem cell transplant within the last 2 years
4. People that no longer have a spleen or their spleens no longer function
5. Someone with known immunodeficiency not related to medications, for example patients with low immunoglobulins (check with your allergist or immunologist to see if you fit this category)
6. Advanced untreated HIV infection
7. Anyone taking prednisone at 20 mg or higher
8. Patients receiving chemotherapy
9. Patients on immunosuppressive’s like TNF blockers or other Biologics often used to treat disorders such as Crohn’s disease, ulcerative colitis, rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, psoriatic arthritis, plaque psoriasis, or other rheumatologic/autoimmune disorders. Please consult your rheumatologist or gastroenterologist

It is important to note that even with a 3rd dose those patients who are immune compromised will still have to wear a mask around people outside of their bubble, keep 6 feet distance, and avoid crowds or poorly ventilated spaces.

There were no critical side effects seen with those who have received a 3rd dose thus far, most had side effects similar to prior Covid vaccines.