

# CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

## Communicating Recommended Delay in Screening Mammograms & Lung Cancer Screening After COVID-19 Vaccination



**Audience:** Vaccine Administrators, MGPS Leaders, Provider Office Colleagues, Marketing and Communications, CMOs, CNOs and Imaging Leaders

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**COVID-19 Response Team Owner:** Vaccine Operations Workgroup

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### Guidance

Patients should be advised to wait four (4) weeks after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine before undergoing a **screening** mammogram or low-dose chest CT scan for lung cancer screening. This guidance applies to screening only and does not apply to diagnostic studies. Although many patients have delayed preventive care screenings like mammograms during the pandemic, and appointments may already be backlogged, notifying patients about this guidance is important.

### Background

COVID-19 vaccination induces a strong immune response. About 1 in 5 people who receive the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine may temporarily experience ipsilateral axillary lymphadenopathy, which is a change in the size or density of the lymph nodes in their armpit area. These changes can be misinterpreted as a concerning clinical finding in screening mammograms or imaging for lung cancer screening. This could lead to unnecessary re-testing or surgical intervention and undue anxiety for patients as they wait for results. In general, side effects, including temporary changes to lymph nodes, are more common after the second dose of vaccine and in those under the age of 55 and typically last 2 weeks in duration.

### Action

Channel	Scripting
COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics	See the updated <a href="#">Script for Vaccine Clinic Screeners and Greeters</a> .
Scheduling new appointments by phone in provider offices and contact centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Have you or do you plan to receive a COVID-19 vaccine?</li></ul> If patient replies yes, ask when they received it or when it is scheduled for. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Have your <b>&lt;mammogram/CT scan&gt;</b> before your first COVID-19 vaccine dose OR at least four weeks after your final dose of the vaccine to avoid any confusion with your results.</li><li>About 1 in 5 people who receive the first or second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine in their upper arm temporarily experience a change in the size of the lymph nodes in their armpit. This means that your immune system is responding to the vaccine and is not harmful to you.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>However, the enlargement of the lymph nodes could be reflected in a mammogram or chest scan. To avoid inaccurate results and need for additional testing, we recommend you have your <b>&lt;mammogram/CT scan&gt;</b> before or at least 4 weeks after your final dose of vaccine.</li> <li>Given that information, may I schedule the appointment at least 4 weeks after your final dose?</li> </ul> <p>If the patient wants to proceed with scheduling within 4 weeks of a COVID-19 vaccine dose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you do have your screening within 4 weeks after a COVID-19 vaccine dose and you are found to have enlarged lymph nodes in the armpit, your doctor may recommend a repeat of the <b>&lt;mammogram/CT scan&gt;</b> or additional tests.</li> </ul>
<b>Self-scheduling mammogram/CT scans appointments online</b>	<p>Add this patient message to the online scheduling tool where possible:</p> <p><b>Important COVID-19 Vaccine Alert re: Screening Mammograms &amp; Low-CT Chest CT Scans</b></p> <p>Schedule your <b>&lt;mammogram/CT scan&gt;</b> before your first COVID-19 vaccine dose OR at least 4 weeks after your final COVID-19 vaccine dose. About 1 in 5 people who receive the vaccine may temporarily experience a change in the size of the lymph nodes in their armpit area that could cause inaccuracies with your <b>&lt;mammogram/CT scan&gt;</b> results, requiring further evaluation.</p>
<b>Automated EHR appointment text and email reminders for scheduled appointments</b>	<p>Did you receive your COVID-19 vaccine? Is it upcoming? It's recommended your <b>&lt;mammogram/CT scan&gt;</b> occur before your first COVID-19 vaccine dose OR at least 4 weeks after your final COVID-19 vaccine dose. Please contact us if you need to reschedule your appt. at <b>&lt;contact information&gt;</b>.</p>
<b>On-site when patient arrives at mammogram/CT scan appointment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have you or do you plan to receive the COVID-19 vaccine?</li> </ul> <p>If patient replies yes, ask when they received it or when it is scheduled for. If they received it within 4 weeks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>About 1 in 5 people who receive the first or second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine may temporarily experience a change in the size of the lymph nodes in their armpit area. This simply means that your immune system is responding to the vaccine and is not harmful to you.</li> <li>However, the enlargement of the lymph nodes could be found in a mammogram or chest scan results and may require further evaluation. To avoid inaccuracies and any need for additional testing, we are recommending that patients have their <b>&lt;mammogram/CT scan&gt;</b> before or at least 4 weeks after their final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.</li> <li>Given that information, would like to reschedule your appointment today? I would be happy to help you get that re-scheduled. I'm so sorry for the inconvenience.</li> </ul> <p>If patient declines to reschedule appointment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I understand. Note that if a COVID-19 vaccine was received within the past four weeks and you are found to have enlarged lymph nodes in the armpit, your doctor may recommend repeating the <b>&lt;mammogram/CT scan&gt;</b> or pursuing other testing.</li> </ul>