

A fifth of vulnerable liver disease patients unsure about the COVID-19 vaccine

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A survey of more than 600 vulnerable liver disease patients, carried out by the British Liver Trust, has highlighted the misinformation surrounding the COVID-19 vaccine with more than one in five thinking the vaccine may not be suitable for them.

Despite advice from leading liver experts to the contrary, the results from the COVID-19 impact survey and calls to the Trust's nurse-led helpline have revealed that many patients are unsure that the vaccine is safe.

The British Society of Gastroenterology and British Association for the Study of the Liver have advised that all liver patients, including those who are immunosuppressed and post-liver transplant, should strongly consider vaccination for COVID-19 with any of the available vaccines.

Pamela Healy, Chief Executive of the British Liver Trust says: "It is concerning that a significant proportion of liver patients are unsure about the vaccine, which is the best line of defence against the COVID-19 virus.

"Unfortunately, throughout the pandemic, misinformation and conspiracy theories have been rife and this has compounded the anxiety and worry faced by those who are most vulnerable to COVID-19. We advise anyone with concerns to speak to seek advice from their clinician and only refer to trusted sources."

[The British Liver Trust is now working with the NHS, the Government and fifteen other frontline charities to do more to publicise the safety of the vaccine to all patients with long-term health conditions.](#)

The research, published by the British Liver Trust, also shows the alarming impact of the pandemic on people with a liver condition who are among the most vulnerable patient groups when it comes to COVID-19.

The COVID-19 impact survey of over 700 liver disease patients, revealed that:

- 90% of clinically extremely vulnerable patients followed the shielding guidance.
- 40% of all respondents are worried about their mental health.
- A third of all respondents have been worried about their liver condition worsening and urgent treatment being delayed.
- A fifth of all respondents are concerned about finances.

Pamela Healy continues, "As we move out of lockdown, we must recognise the huge impact the COVID pandemic has had on the most vulnerable people in our society. People living with a liver condition are among the highest risk groups should they develop coronavirus and have made huge sacrifices to keep safe. It is important that we, along with key policy-makers within the NHS, understand how the current and future situation affects these very vulnerable people so we can campaign for better healthcare and support services to meet their needs, now and in the future."

The British Liver Trust is the largest UK charity for all adults with liver disease. The charity works across the UK to increase awareness and influence decisions that will improve care, treatment and outcomes for patients.

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