MEMO

Date: March 31, 2021

To: All Referring Clinicians

From: Dr. Marco Essig, Diagnostic Imaging Provincial Specialty Lead, Shared Health

Re: Diagnostic Imaging Referrals Post COVID-19 Vaccine

We wish to inform all clinicians who provide diagnostic imaging referrals of new evidence that has identified concerns regarding results from imaging tests performed on patients that have recently received their COVID-19 vaccination.

As a result, we have new recommendations for when providing referrals for your patients that have received their COVID-19 vaccination. These recommendations aim to help you provide the best possible care while avoiding unnecessary tests and procedures.

Recommendations:
- **Vaccination for COVID-19 should not be delayed** due to scheduled imaging for patients with cancer or undergoing screening for cancer
- Imaging should be performed **prior** to vaccination when possible
- When imaging is required **after** vaccination:
  - The vaccine should be administered to the contralateral side of a known or suspected primary cancer (i.e. breast cancer or upper extremity melanoma), and both doses should be on the same side.
  - Providers should **not** delay urgent clinically indicated imaging—i.e., for acute symptoms, short-interval monitoring, or urgent treatment planning—because of a patient’s vaccine history.
  - In all other cases, consider postponing imaging for 6 weeks after the final dose of vaccine
- In patients with clinically apparent adenopathy in the setting of recent ipsilateral vaccination, consider observation of 6 weeks until resolution before initiating imaging workup
- For instances where adenopathy is overwhelmingly likely due to vaccination rather than neoplasm, an expectant management strategy without default imaging follow-up is appropriate. In high-risk patients follow up ultrasound to ensure resolution of findings and/or for tissue diagnosis could be considered.

Please note that patients referred for imaging will be asked to provide the date of vaccination and site/side (if applicable) for the interpreting radiologist’s reference.

As more information about post-COVID-19-vaccination adenopathy becomes available it may be appropriate to change these recommendations and timelines may change. If you have any questions, please contact a radiologist to discuss.

Resources:
- [Radiology Business: Most routine imaging should be scheduled 6 weeks after 2nd vaccine dose, major cancer centers say](https://www.radiologybusiness.com/features/most-routine-imaging-should-be-scheduled-6-weeks-after-2nd-vaccine-dose-major-cancer-centers-say)