

ANTHC Rheumatology COVID-19 Patient Handout

You are considered at high risk for infections due to your rheumatologic illness and some of the medications that you are taking. We understand that you are especially concerned and would like take appropriate steps in order to prevent contracting and spreading COVID-19. Based on the most recent Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Alaska Department of Health guidelines we offer the following recommendations. Please note that these recommendations may change based on CDC and local guidelines.

EVERYDAY PRECAUTIONS

- If you have been outside of Alaska in the last 2 weeks, self-isolate for 14 days
- If you must leave the house, avoid crowds and maintain at least 6 feet of distance from others
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use alcohol based hand sanitizer
- Wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- Avoid touching your face (eyes, mouth, nose, etc)
- Avoid touching high-touch surfaces in public places such as door handle or elevator buttons
- Avoid all non-essential travel and cruise ships
- Work from home if possible. We are happy to provide you with a letter to facilitate this

MEDICATIONS

- Do not stop your medications if you feel fine and do not have any signs or symptoms of infections
- Some medications are SAFE to continue if you get an infection. These include Tylenol, hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil), Otezla and IVIG.
- If you have fever (100.3 F) or signs of respiratory illness such as a new cough or trouble breathing, stop taking your immunosuppressive medication and let your rheumatologist and primary care provider know right away. These medications include the following:
 - azathioprine, leflunomide, methotrexate
 - mycophenolate mofetil, mycophenolic acid, cyclophosphamide, cyclosporine A, tacrolimus
 - Biologic therapies: Actemra, Cimzia, Cosentyx, Enbrel, Humira, Orencia, Remicade, Renflexis, Rituximab, Simponi, Stelara
 - Janus Kinase (JAK) inhibitors: Xeljanz
- If you are on prednisone therapy and you have any of above infection symptoms contact your rheumatologist for further recommendations. Do not stop prednisone without talking to your doctor.

- If you have been in contact with anyone with known COVID-19 infection stop your immunosuppressive medications and let your rheumatologist know

OFFICE VISITS

- If you have a fever, cough, or other respiratory symptoms we ask you to contact the provider's office before going to any appointment
- There will be no routine rheumatology office visits until June 1st or further notice. A limited number of urgent visits may be available.
- We will be setting up video visits and phone visits, if appropriate, to minimize travel and contact with others.
- Rheumatology office contact info:
 - RN case manager 729-2071
 - ACM schedulers 729-1525 or 2066

INFORMATION

- We suggest that you refer to these resources to learn more about rheumatology related recommendations and keep updated on the latest COVID-19 information:
 - CDC: www.cdc.gov
 - Alaska Department of Health: www.dhss.alaska.gov
 - CreakyJoints: <https://creakyjoints.org/>
 - American College of Rheumatology: <https://www.rheumatology.org/>
 - Arthritis Foundation: <https://arthritis.org/>