COVID-19 information for Pediatric Rheumatology patients and their families

Are people taking immunosuppressing medications at increased risk?

We do not know whether taking immunosuppressant drugs further increases the risk of catching COVID-19. Please continue to take medications as prescribed, unless otherwise directed.

Appointments with Duke Pediatric Rheumatology:

We take measures to screen every patient who checks in for clinic appointments. At this time, we recommend you attend all scheduled appointments.

In the event your child or family member has cough, fever of 100.4 or greater, or shortness of breath on the day of a clinic visit, do not come to the appointment. Instead, call the office at (919)684-6575 for instructions. Your appointment will be rescheduled, and we will provide further guidance.

School attendance:

At this time, we recommend you follow guidance from your school district. This means that if school is in session, we recommend you send your child to school; it is not routinely recommended that our patients specifically be taken out of school. If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 exposure at your child’s school, contact our office for guidance.

Best practice to avoid getting the virus:

• **Wash your hands!** Wet your hands with clean, running water, than lather them with soap. Scrub both sides, between your fingers and under your nails for at least 20 seconds (about as long as it takes to sing the “happy birthday song” twice). **Use hand sanitizers on the go.** Don’t rely on them, but when soap and water aren’t an option, use a store-bought hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Keep a bottle in the car, and in your purse or pocket. Do not use home-made hand sanitizer recipes, as these do not prevent infection.

• **Don’t touch your face with your hands.** Use a tissue instead of your fingers.

• **Avoid crowded places.** At this time, the CDC suggests that people over 60 years old and those with severe chronic medical conditions avoid attending crowded locations or events, such as concerts, conferences, movie theaters, public transportation or church. We advise ‘staying 6 feet back’ from people who are coughing or sneezing.

• **Disinfect surfaces regularly.** Clean high-touch surfaces like countertops, light switches, doorknobs and the inside of your car with disinfectant. Use a mixture of 60% isopropyl alcohol and 40% water to kill germs on high-touch objects and surfaces, like your cell phone, computer keyboard, remote, doorknobs and faucets. Wash eyeglasses with soap and warm water every day. Isopropyl alcohol, hydrogen peroxide and bleach can all effectively kill surface viruses in about a minute. Soap and water as well as disinfectants like Lysol also work, though not as well.

• **Cough or sneeze into your elbow or tissue.** Throw away all your used tissues immediately.

• **Avoid handshakes, fist bumps, and hugs for the time being.**

• **Skip the mask.** Standard surgical face masks won’t protect against viruses in healthy people, but if you’re sick, a mask can help block droplets from sneezing or coughing so you won’t infect others.

• **Keep up to date by visiting our website as well as other reliable sources.**

Duke Pediatric Rheumatology:


American College of Rheumatology: [https://www.rheumatology.org/Announcements](https://www.rheumatology.org/Announcements)