

Patients:

Your doctors are closely following the outbreak of COVID-19 (also known as Coronavirus) as it has progressed, originally in China but now in the United States and in some cases, in our own communities. This virus has proven to be quite infectious and the number of cases is expanding rapidly. To date we have no specific treatment for the virus and there is no vaccine.

The following patients have a higher risk for serious illness if they were to be infected with the COVID-19 virus (please note this list is not exhaustive, and there may be other reasons for higher risk):

- Older adults,
- People who have serious chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes, lung disease, and chronic kidney disease,
- People with certain underlying diseases that decrease their immune system (including Cancer, chronic liver disease, cirrhosis, end stage liver disease, post liver or kidney transplant, Common variable immune deficiency, Crohn's disease and Ulcerative colitis), and/or
- People on medications that suppress the immune system (including Steroids, Prednisone, Biologic therapy, Remicade, Humira, Simponi, Cimzia, Entyvio, Stelara, Xeljanz, 6-MP, Imuran, Azathioprine, Methotrexate, Chemotherapy agents and anti-rejection medications).

If you have a higher risk for severe illness, we strongly recommend that you take the following preventive measures:

- 1) Avoid travel to any country identified as Level 3 or Level 2 (“High Risk”) by the CDC for the disease (See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html> for current status of each country).
- 2) Avoid contact with anyone who has travelled to a High Risk country in the last 28 days. This especially includes close family members, who should avoid travel to those areas as well.
- 3) Avoid cruises and non-essential air travel, even within the United States. Especially try to avoid travel to states reporting large outbreaks (e.g. Washington State, California, & New York). This situation changes daily so please stay up to date on affected areas.
- 4) Avoid crowds and large gatherings. This includes sporting events, concerts, theater, movies, and shopping malls.
- 5) Ensure you have adequate supplies and food in case you have to be in isolation/quarantine. It is especially important that you have an adequate supply of any necessary medications.
- 6) If you must go out in public, try to keep a 6-foot distance between yourself and others, and wash your hands frequently and use an alcohol-based hand cleaner if available (at least 60% alcohol). Do not touch your face or feed yourself until you have washed your hands thoroughly.
- 7) Avoid public transportation and ride-sharing (Uber, Lyft, etc.)

If you are ill (Fever, Upper respiratory symptoms, flu-like symptoms) and have an appointment, please call the office for further instructions or to reschedule. If you have further questions, please contact your physician's office through the Patient Portal. However, due to the high volume of portal messages we are receiving about this, it may not be possible for us to answer immediately.

We will continue to closely monitor this outbreak and follow guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). You can find additional information on the [U.S. Department of State](#) and the [CDC site](#), including [COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions](#).