



Katy Rheumatology
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Given the spread of the global Coronavirus (COVID-19) it becomes necessary for us to make additional decisions to further safeguard our KRA family. Despite the presence of COVID-19 now in our community, we are continuing to take care of all our patients. However, we do ask that if you have traveled outside the United States, or have been in contact with a case and are experiencing the following symptoms Cough, Shortness of breath or Fever to stay home and do not visit any clinics. Please call our office and we will gladly take a message which will be responded within 24 hours. Due to the high volume of calls received here are a few questions and answers in regards to COVID-19

What are the risks of COVID-19 to people with rheumatic conditions?

People with rheumatic disease may be at greater risk of developing infections and more severe infections. This is due to the diseases themselves and to the medications used to treat these diseases. This vulnerability can affect people with several rheumatic conditions, including: lupus, myositis, rheumatoid arthritis, scleroderma, undifferentiated connective tissue disease and vasculitis.

Other people predisposed to developing serious cases of COVID-19 include those who are aged 65 years or older or who have diabetes (type 1 or type 2), or renal (kidney) disease.

Should I stop taking my medications if I have a rheumatic disease and am concerned about COVID-19?

In patients without symptoms of COVID-19, the decision to stop or reduce immune suppressing medications is an individual one, to be shared by physician and patient. In some patients, the risk of a disease flare might outweigh the possible benefits of stopping medications. Little if anything is known about how rheumatology medications affect COVID-19 infections.

How can I protect myself from COVID-19?

As with any respiratory illness there are certain preventive measures that you can take. These include:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when not near soap and water.
- Clean and disinfect areas you and others touch often.
- CDC does not recommend healthy people wear face-masks for protection, but try social distance & self-quarantine if at high risk.

With respect to international travel, it is best to avoid traveling to areas with a high incidence of COVID-19 infection. This information is constantly changing, and the most current information may be found on the website of the [Centers for Disease Control](#).

In addition to the risk of possibly contracting the illness, it is likely that you will be quarantined for 14 days upon return to the US.

For all patients over the age of 18 with diagnosis of autoimmune disease on immune medication therapy, we recommend that you follow the CDC and Texas health department guidelines for self-quarantine, social distancing and extreme sanitation.

At this time we do not recommend for patients to stop or change their current treatment.

-KRA STAFF