

Coronavirus (COVID-19) – information for children, young people and families from the Rheumatology team

We understand that you might be worried about coronavirus – also known as COVID-19 – particularly if your child has a long-term health condition, such as a rheumatology condition. This information sheet from the Rheumatology team at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) sets out our advice for children and young people who use our services. Please read this alongside our general information about coronavirus (COVID-19) available online at www.gosh.nhs.uk/news/coronavirus-covid-19-information-children-young-people-and-families

This guidance comes from the British Society of Rheumatology and the British Society of Paediatric and Adolescent Rheumatology, and has been approved by the clinical team at GOSH.

Does COVID-19 affect children?

The evidence to date shows that although children do develop COVID-19 very few children will develop severe infection with COVID-19.

Children and young people who are taking steroids or having biologic infusions should be considered at risk for any viral disease, so precautions for vulnerable groups, as outlined in our general information sheet should be followed.

Your family should follow the guidance on social distancing unless advised otherwise by the clinical team. If you are unsure, email or phone your clinical team.

If your child has any additional medical problems, please seek advice from the other teams involved in their care.

Specific advice about medicines from the Rheumatology team

Taking your medication is very important and not taking it could make your condition worse. Please consult your specialty team before making any decisions regarding your medication.

If you are planning to start or switch to a new medication, this may now need to be reviewed. Please remember patients on long-term glucocorticoids (steroids, prednisolone) should not stop these suddenly.

If an infection is present, immunosuppressive therapy will be paused for the duration of the infection and until they feel well, in consultation with their rheumatology team. In practice, this may mean that infusions may be postponed until you feel better.



Should we make alternative clinic appointments?

Clinicians are looking to remove the need for patients to attend face-to-face appointments wherever possible. This might involve telephone appointments or exploring video consultations.

If your child has an upcoming clinic appointment, we will be in touch with you to discuss how we can best carry this out remotely.

Is there anything else we should do?

Have a look at this video online at www.wordday.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/WORDday2020-CORONA-PReS-guidelines.mp4 produced by the Paediatric Rheumatology European Society (PRES).

Further information and support

Information from the NHS at www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

Information for children is available on the BBC Newsround website at www.bbc.co.uk/newsround

