

# Recommendations for patients suffering from Rheumatic Musculoskeletal Diseases

## COVID-19 Informations

This information was last updated on Tuesday March 31th 2020, but may change over time. We recommend you to also check your government website as appropriate.

A containment system is now in place in most countries, traveling is prohibited except in certain situations (see our government website). Travelling is typically permitted if you face a health issue, for example. **Respect barrier gestures:** wash your hands with soap and water (for at least 1 min) or with hand sanitizer several times a day and after any contact, after sneezing (in your elbow) or nose blows (with disposable tissue) and after touching surfaces that may have been contaminated. Say 'hello' without shaking hands or kissing, respect a distance of at least one meter (3 feet). Avoid touching your face with your hands without having washed them if you have been outside. In case of new and unusual respiratory symptoms put a surgical mask on, in order to protect people around you and respect barrier gestures for 14 days (see below).

**Do not discontinue your immunosuppressive drugs or biologics**, except in case of signs of infection (fever, cough, breathing difficulties, myalgias, anosmia...) and only after referring to your physician or GP.

**Do not discontinue your prednisone** (or colchicine for auto-inflammatory diseases). Do not discontinue hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine if you take it for your Rheumatic Musculoskeletal Disease. Order your Hydroxychloroquine at your pharmacy a couple of day before your pack is finished (specific prescription instructions may depend each country).

**Do not take NSAIDs nor steroids to treat fever or infection.** Take paracetamol instead.

**If you are on long-term immunosuppressive drugs, biologics or corticosteroids** at a dose higher than 10-15 mg prednisone equivalent/day **you are more vulnerable.** Stay as much as possible at home and ask those around you to do your shopping and limit contact, while respecting barrier gestures. Vulnerable people must imperatively stay as much as possible at home, practice teleworking if possible. Contact your occupational practitioner. For parents with a child on biotherapies or immunosuppressants, there is generally no reason to remove parents from their workplace, but recommend respecting barrier gestures as best as possible. In special situations, contact your employer's medical department.

**If you have been in contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 or if you experience symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, anosmia (loss of smell), reathlessness...)**

- Stay at home, don't go out at all
- Respect barrier gestures
- If you have symptoms, call your GP or your
- Monitor your temperature twice a day for the next 14 days
- If it's possible, sleep separately. The common areas (e.g. bathroom), if they shared, must be cleaned and disinfected frequently (use bleach, check recommendation for use). Do not share towels and hygiene products.
- Avoid touching handles, switches and flat surfaces, clean and disinfect frequently to protect your family members around you
- Open windows to ventilate your house / apartment / room several times a day