

Dear Patients,

It is a crazy time and I know that there are many concerns. Many of you are on immunosuppressive drugs, and as you know, these drugs can increase your risk of infections. There are no specific rules posted as to what rheumatology patients should do, but these are my thoughts...

- Patients who are taking Plaquenil and Sulfasalazine may continue on those medications without any changes to the dosages.
- Patients on immunosuppressive medications (methotrexate, mycophenolate, leflunomide, self-injections, and IV medications) should start stretching their doses out if their symptoms allow. People who have Prednisone can temporarily supplement their treatment with low doses such as 5 mg a day. I would rather people feel a little creaky but feel a little safer.
- If you do take Prednisone, please do not take NSAIDs (Advil, Motrin, Aleve, Naprosyn, Celebrex, celecoxib, Mobic, Meloxicam, etc) at the same time because it is too hard on the stomach.

Patients that are going to work need to use standard precautions, **including those advised by the Centers for disease control**, such as: avoid people who are sick, avoid crowds, wash your hands frequently, and do not touch your hands to your face.

Although I cannot tell patients that they absolutely should not go to work, until things settle down, I would recommend that they not travel unnecessarily. **See the CDC's website:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>.

We are attempting to set up a temporary email so that you will be able to contact us in the event we have to close our office. Please only use this if it is urgent.

In order to communicate with you by electronic communications other than telephone or facsimile, the Texas Medical Board requires (22 T.A.C. §174.4) that I provide patients with written or electronic notification of our privacy practices prior to evaluation or treatment via a telemedicine medical service. In addition, a good faith effort must be made to obtain the patient's written or electronic acknowledgement, including by e-mail, of the notice. Therefore, please be advised that our notice of privacy practices is located at <https://www.fondren.com/privacy.html>. Please include an acknowledgement that you have reviewed our privacy practices in your e-mails.

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