



RED CROSS WAR MEMORIAL
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
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Paediatric rheumatology Covid 2019 patient communication 12/03/2020

The new corona virus is an infectious viral respiratory disease. As a paediatric rheumatology department, we are aware that many of our patients take drugs that may decrease the immune system. We are reassured that this disease has so far been relatively mild in children, but we have been contacted by many patients enquiring about this disease and the risks involved. There have been a few cases in South Africa, and the risks are low for now, but judging on how this has spread elsewhere, we want to advise patients about precautions.

Everyone:

Wash hands frequently. Do not attend large crowded functions (church, theatre, movies, shows). Do not go to the hospital unnecessarily. For now, we are still running clinics and appointments as usual. If cases increase, we will consider delaying your hospital visit if your child is stable and doesn't need to be seen. Make sure that you have enough medication for your child and email us if you don't.

Please make sure that you are able to contact our department via paedrheumclinic@gmail.com (preferred method) or call 0216585111 and ask to speak to the rheumatologist on call. Please bear in mind that we cannot always answer calls, but will reply to emails sooner. Please make sure that we have your correct contact number, and send it to us on the email.

If your child is scheduled for an **IV infusion** (rituximab, cyclophosphamide, infliximab, tocilizumab) please call before you attend the hospital.

We cannot advise about travel or whether your child needs to stay home from school for now.

There is a lot that we don't know about this virus. It is important that you don't panic, take responsible measures and call or email us if necessary.

Based on what we know now, **we are not recommending that your child stops taking his/her medication**, but we have put specific guidance in for the different medications below. **If your child has been on steroids for a long time or takes high dose steroids it is very important not to stop these suddenly as this can be dangerous. Please discuss with your doctor before stopping medication.**



