

## When do you need to call a Doctor?

For most people who have these symptoms now, it is more likely to be an infection that is not Coronavirus.

You only need to phone a doctor if you have symptoms and any of the following apply to you:

- they are the type of symptoms you would usually contact a GP about
- you have travelled from an affected area
- you are a close contact of a confirmed case in Ireland - if you are, the Department of Public Health will contact you.

## Keep up your healthy routines

Your routine may be affected by the COVID-19 outbreak in different ways. But during difficult times like this, it's best if you can keep some structure in your day.

It is important to pay attention to your needs and feelings, especially during times of stress. You may still be able to do some of the things you enjoy and find relaxing.

For example, you could try to:

- Exercise regularly, especially walking – remember to keep that distance!
- Keep regular sleep routines
- Maintain a healthy, balanced diet
- Avoid excess alcohol / smoking. This will not help your health in the long-term
- Practice relaxation techniques such as breathing exercises
- Read a book

## What are the symptom's of COVID-19/Coronavirus?

It can take up to 14 days for symptoms of coronavirus to appear.

The most common symptoms of coronavirus are:

- A cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry
- Shortness of breath
- Breathing difficulties
- A high temperature (fever)

## Questions I would like to ask at my next appointment

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Tallaght  
University  
Hospital

Ospidéal  
Ollscoile  
Thamhlachta

An Academic Partner of Trinity College Dublin

PATIENT  
INFORMATION  
LEAFLET

## Rheumatology Patients

Coronavirus  
**COVID-19**



Coronavirus  
COVID-19  
Public Health  
Advice

What Should I Do?

## Why have you received this leaflet?

Due to the COVID-19 / Coronavirus currently circulating we are sending this information leaflet to all patients who are due to attend a Rheumatology Clinic. Please note clinics are now done mainly by telephone and video for your safety.

Please read the information carefully and write down any questions you may have when reading this information so you can ask them at your appointment.

We appreciate that patients taking immunosuppression medication may feel particularly vulnerable and anxious, so we hope you find this information useful.

## What we know so far?

Most patients will have a mild illness and recover. The mortality is 1-2% and highest in over 80s, those with chronic heart and lung disease and diabetes.



The most up to date information from studies of the outbreak in Wuhan and elsewhere have not identified that immuno-suppressive treatments prescribed in rheumatology patients put them at a higher rate of mortality.

The majority of patients will have a mild illness and recover.

At present there is no known benefit to stopping your medication. **Do not stop steroids suddenly.**

Please continue to take your medication as prescribed and check the up to date information on [www.tuh.ie](http://www.tuh.ie) and the Arthritis Ireland website and facebook page for guidance.

The Covid-19 epidemic may last several months so if you stop your medicine you will be likely to have a flare during this period.

Should this happen you would need to restart taking the medication and most likely have to take more intensive treatment with steroids. We would never recommend that patients stop taking any type of medication without consulting their doctor.

## What can I do to protect myself?

One of the most important things you can do is listen to advice around COVID-19 from a credible source.

The HSE are regularly updating information for the public on their website. The other things that you can do, whilst they might sound very basic but will help to stop the spread of infection and keep you safe.

- Practice regular handwashing with water and soap throughout the day. Particularly important before you prepare any food, eat any food and after you use public transport
- If you have been out and about then wash your hands with soap and water when you get home
- Don't touch your face. You should also avoid people who are unwell
- Follow advice on where to travel from the Department of Foreign Affairs
- Practice social distancing – stay two metres away from others when outdoors and avoid large gatherings)
- If you are unwell with respiratory symptoms do not attend a scheduled hospital appointment. You could expose other patients and staff. Contact your GP