



BRIGHAM AND  
WOMEN'S HOSPITAL

| **AERD Center** |

**Monday, March 16, 2020**

**Please take a moment to read the following:**

We are closely monitoring the spread of COVID-19 and taking every precaution to ensure that, no matter how the situation evolves, we can continue to safely care for all of our patients.

**Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Asthma/AERD:**

We are advising all of our patients, especially those with asthma, to remain on their medications. It's important that your asthma be well controlled, especially now. None of the asthma medications, including inhaled corticosteroids and biologics (Xolair, Dupixent, Nucala, or Fasenra), have been shown to increase the risk of getting COVID-19. Also, if you become infected with COVID-19, there is no information that being on any of the asthma medications will make it worse.

At this time, there is very little data about how the new strain of coronavirus affects people with asthma. In a study of 1099 patients with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis in China (<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2002032>), asthma was not noted as a risk factor. However, asthma may be under-diagnosed and under-reported in China, and other strains of coronaviruses have been known to exacerbate asthma, so it is possible that COVID-19 will do so as well.

Many patients with asthma may feel more comfortable having an extra supply of their regular asthma medications at home, with access to albuterol if needed. Please reach out to your asthma/AERD provider for prescriptions if you need refills.

**Coronavirus (COVID-19) and NSAIDs/Aspirin:**

There have been occasional mentions in the news that taking NSAIDs or aspirin might be a risk factor for worsened symptoms from COVID-19. At this time, we have no data to support this concern, and the use of aspirin or NSAIDs was not linked as a risk factor in the patients in China. Therefore, for patients with AERD who are desensitized to aspirin and maintained on a daily dose of aspirin, we are currently recommending that you remain on your usual dose of aspirin. If any new information emerges that would change our recommendation, we will provide updated information. If your local specialist has a different recommendation based on your personal situation, please follow their recommendations.

**Social distancing but remaining connected:**

Please see below for general recommendations regarding social distancing. It is important that you follow the guidelines required by your local public health officials. However, during these times it will become increasingly important that we don't lose our human connections. There are a number of resources that may be helpful to you within the international community of patients



with AERD. These include a Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/507118766355639/>), a Yahoo support group (<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/samters/info>), and the Samter's Society (<https://www.samterssociety.org/>) which is an active patient-advocacy group. We encourage you to be a part of any of these support mechanisms that would work for you.

**As a reminder, there are proactive steps that everyone can take to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other infections:**

1. Frequently wash your hands with soap and water (for at least 20 seconds). If unable to wash, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
2. Avoid touching your face, eyes and mouth.
3. Regularly clean commonly used surfaces with disinfectant.
4. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Throw the tissue away and then wash or sanitize your hands. If a tissue is not available, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow.
5. Avoid shaking hands (even in a business setting).
6. Avoid sharing food and drinks.
7. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
8. Please practice social distancing (6 feet away) as much as possible and stay home and keep your distance from others if you are sick.
9. People who think they may have been exposed to COVID-19 should contact their healthcare provider immediately.

**Should I avoid international travel?**

The impact of COVID-19 around the globe is evolving quickly. All patients should avoid travel to areas designated with a Level 3 CDC Travel warning. Patients with asthma should strongly consider avoiding non-essential travel.

**Should I avoid domestic travel?**

The prevalence and distribution of COVID-19 infection in the United States is evolving rapidly. Patients with asthma should strongly consider avoiding non-essential travel. Patients should review the latest information and advisories before embarking on any trip.

**I was on a crowded T train this morning, near a patient that was coughing. Should I be tested for COVID-19?**



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Testing is not indicated in this situation. The COVID-19 tests are currently only used for patients with symptoms and risk factors such as travel to Level 3 areas or exposure to a confirmed patient with COVID-19. Testing guidance is likely to evolve rapidly and indications for testing will likely change in the coming days/weeks.

**Should I avoid crowded places (i.e., the T, a restaurant, a concert)?**

The CDC now recommends that people with risk factors for increased disease severity (older adults and those with chronic medical conditions [we are including moderate-to-severe asthma in this group]) spend most of their time at home, avoiding activities that involve large crowds.

The following are links to reliable on-line resources, although please understand that this information is RAPIDLY changing and may quickly be out of date:

**CDC:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

**Brigham And Women's:**

<https://www.brighamandwomens.org/about-bwh/newsroom/covid-19>

Sincerely,

Tanya M. Laidlaw, MD and the Brigham and Women's Hospital AERD Center providers