

**Should I stop taking immunosuppressants (e.g: hydroxychloroquin/Plaquenil, methotrexate, biologics, etc) during the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic?**

The current advice is that you **should not stop taking your medications unless advised** to do so by your rheumatologist or rheumatology nurse. You are more likely to have a flare-up by stopping your medication, which may make you more susceptible to infections.

A Flare-up may require steroids/prednisone, which also puts you at a higher risk of infections, such as Covid-19, bacteria, fungus, and other viruses. Furthermore, a previously effective medication may lose its efficacy after a restart.

**HYDROXYCHLOROQUINE/PLAQUENIL**

Continue hydroxychloroquine/Plaquenil as it has been used in Korea as a treatment for Covid-19. Stop hydroxychloroquine/Plaquenil, if your MD ophthalmologists instruct you to stop due to retinal toxicity.

**METHOTREXATE**

If you only have runny nose and sore throat, you may continue methotrexate.

If you have a fever, cough, shortness of breath, or are too sick to work, STOP methotrexate.

When in doubt, do not take methotrexate until you are back to normal.

**BIOLOGICS**

TNF inhibitors: Enbrel, Humira, Remicade, Cimzia, Simponi

IL-6 inhibitors: Actemra, Kevzara

IL-17 inhibitors: Cosentyx, Taltz

IL-12/23 inhibitor: Stelara

JAK inhibitors: Xeljanz, Olumiant, Rinvoq

B-cell inhibitors: Rituxan, Benlysta

If you are sick, STOP taking BIOLOGICS and see a primary care physician (PCP) for evaluation. Urgent care/ER if a PCP is unavailable.

**General Recommendations**

- SOCIAL DISTANCING is the most effective method to prevent the of spreading infection.
- Stay at home, work from home.
- Avoid going out, such as restaurant/bar, church, gymnasium, museum, theater, etc.
- If you have to go out, go by yourself and wear a mask if possible. Disinfect shopping carts before use and credit cards after use. Use your own pen to sign.
- Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds (singing *happy birthday* twice).
- Avoid touching your face.
- **Take NAC (N-acetylcysteine) 1000 mg twice a day to supplement your immune system. NAC can be ordered from Amazon without a prescription.**

**Contact your family Doctor to obtain Covid-19 testing if symptomatic**

**COVID-19 symptoms may include: Cough, Shortness of breath**, or at least two of these symptoms: Fever, Chills, Repeated shaking with chills, Muscle pain, Headache, Sore throat, New loss of taste or smell.