

## **ADVICE TO PATIENTS WITH INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE IN VIEW OF CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

Patients on immunosuppression are not at increased risk of catching Coronavirus. However, if they do, they may be at extra risk of complications.

Immunosuppression therapy should be stopped immediately if flu like symptoms start - persistent cough or fever. Key points for patients:

1. Carry out stringent social distancing+ if taking an immunosuppression medication eg azathioprine, infliximab or adalimumab OR stable on dual (two) therapy.
2. Carry out shielding++ if on immunosuppression plus over the age of 70, have moderate severe bowel inflammation and any other disease such as heart or lung disease.
3. Mild inflammatory bowel disease patients should carry out social distancing.
4. Follow good hand hygiene and avoid touching your face.
5. Continue therapy (IMMUNOSUPPRESSION / DMARD ) unless advised not to take it. This should not be discontinued if patients do not have any symptoms of infection.
6. If you have any flu-like symptoms – cough / temperature - self-isolate and stop medication **BUT ADVISE THE GASTROENTEROLOGY TEAM IF YOU STOP YOUR MEDICATION OR HAVE BEEN ADVISED TO STOP YOUR MEDICATION BY THE GP OR THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT.**

7. Please ensure that your vaccinations with influenza and pneumococcal are up to date in conjunction with your GP.

+ Stringent social distancing - avoid gatherings with people who you do not live with. Avoid people with coughs, colds and fevers.

++ Shielding - not going outside. Avoid all social contact face to face. No visitors. Family members you live with should carry out stringent social isolation.

For further information please see the following web page:

<https://www.bsg.org.uk/covid-19-advice/bsg-advice-for-management-of-inflammatory-bowel-diseases-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>