

## Rheumatology Clinic COVID-19 Return to School FAQs

We hope everyone is staying safe during these unusual times of a global pandemic. The SARS-CoV2 virus has changed the way we go about our lives and has had physical, emotional, and economic impacts on all of us. We are particularly concerned about the impact of this situation on our children, both physically and emotionally. We encourage everyone to talk to their children about how they are feeling and work together on stress management. Our clinic has a variety of resources to help with this, if needed.

Beyond the universal stress of the pandemic, there are added concerns about risk of the SARS-CoV2 virus on children who have been diagnosed with certain conditions and may be on certain medications. We have created this guide to inform you about what we know and what we don't know as well as share our **current** guidance about returning to school in the fall. Please know that these recommendations are *subject to change with new data* and we encourage you to check back regularly.

In considering these issues, we have reviewed the risks to our patients from two perspectives (their underlying medical diagnosis/specific complications and the potential medications they could be prescribed) and assigned each a "level of risk". The levels of risk are defined as Low, Moderate and High. These categories were based on our opinions and data (when data was available). The risk rating indicates our level of concern over complications from the SARS-CoV2 infection if a person became infected. These medications do not change the risk of getting infected (that is determined by exposures and behaviors like mask wearing and hand washing), but rather, they could change the risk of becoming quite ill, if infected. For patients in low risk categories, we are comfortable with our patients returning to school *under the appropriate precautions*. For patients in moderate risk or high-risk categories, we favor remote learning options at this time.

### Frequently Asked Questions:

#### 1. Does my child's diagnosis or other complications place them at increased risk?

First, we recognize children with rheumatic disease represent a huge spectrum of disease and can have any number of other medical conditions and complications. Furthermore, there have been no convincing studies at this time that demonstrate pediatric patients with rheumatic conditions are at significantly increased risk for SARS-CoV2.





However, patients with systemic connective tissue disease (e.g., systemic lupus erythematosus, mixed connective tissue disease, juvenile dermatomyositis, systemic sclerosis, systemic vasculitis) often have other specific organs involved that may place them at higher risk. Particularly if your child has significant lung, cardiac or renal involvement, we urge you to contact your child's pulmonologist, cardiologist, or nephrologist for additional recommendations. Apart these issues, we recommend our patients and families take standard precautions (masks in public, social distancing, hand washing, avoiding crowds, etc.). We also have not seen any data to suggest that infection with SARS-CoV2 can result in relapse of any of these conditions.

## 2. Should my child return to in person school in the fall?

We have received many inquiries about our recommendations regarding a return to school in the fall. This is a difficult question as we all balance concerns about education, socialization, risk of infection, need for structure and emotional health. We are awaiting details about return plans from most schools, but hope to see plans for screening, social distancing and mask wearing. Please know, if you have unique concerns about your child and prefer a remote learning program for next year, you can contact us to discuss and we will work with you to provide any medical documentation needed. That said, for our patients in moderate or high risk categories, we recommend online school options for now.

This has been a trying time for everyone, but we are continually amazed by the resilience of our families and our children. The slogan 'We are in this together' is not just a public relations campaign, but truly encompasses our approach in the Rheumatology clinic. We are here for you and your children and hope everyone is staying safe.

## 3. Does my child's medication place them at increased risk?

Relative to the medications we frequently prescribe, we have been tracking available data to determine if the medications increase the risk of complications from the SARS-CoV2 virus, if a person becomes infected. It is important to know that data about this topic is very limited, but the following table outlines the most common immunomodulator prescriptions and the relative risk, though clearly does not represent all medications that are utilized in our clinic. We rate the medications as low, moderate or high risk based on available data and our concerns based on how these medications effect the immune system. As mentioned above, these recommendations and categories are subject to change based on new data becoming available.



# SCOTTISH RITE



Drug	Brand Names	SARS-CoV2 Complication Risk
Cyclophosphamide	Cytoxan	High
Rituximab	Rituxan	High
Methylprednisolone ("pulse"/IV dosing)	Solumedrol	High
Prednisone	Orapred, deltasone (and others)	Moderate
Mycophenolate	Cellcept, Myfortic	Moderate
Cyclosporine	Neoral (and others)	Moderate
Tacrolimus	Prograf	Moderate
Azathioprine	Imuran	Moderate
Belimumab	Benlysta	Moderate
Ixekizumab	Taltz	Moderate
Tofacitinib	Xeljanz	Moderate
Hydroxychloroquine	Plaquenil	Low
Methotrexate	Rasuvo, Otrexup (and others)	Low
Etanercept	Enbrel	Low
Adalimumab	Humira	Low
Abatacept	Orencia	Low
Secukinumab	Cosentyx	Low
Apremilast	Otezla	Low
Sulfasalazine	Azulfidine	Low
Leflunomide	Arava	Low
Ustekinumab	Stelara	Low
Infliximab	Remicade	Low
Tocilizumab	Actemra	Low
Anakinra	Kineret	Low
Canakinumab	Ilaris	Low
Colchicine	Colcrys	Low
All NSAID medications	Examples: Naprosyn, Meloxicam, Celebrex, Ibuprofen, Aspirin	Low
Intra-articular corticosteroid injections	Also known as "joint injections"	Low
IVIG/subcutaneous immunoglobulin	Gamunex, Privigen, Hizentra (and others)	Low

