

# Navigating the Coronavirus Pandemic: A Rheumatology Patient's Guide to Optimal Care

As a chronic illness patient, you may have many concerns about staying healthy during COVID-19. Use this quick guide as an overview.

## The 5 Golden Rules

**1.**

Follow social distancing and handwashing and hygiene practices per public health guidance

**2.**

If you're healthy, remain on your current medications

**3.**

Never stop/change a medication without talking to your rheumatologist or primary care doctor

**4.**

Stay in touch with your doctor and keep your appointments (in person or telehealth)

**5.**

Take care of physical and mental health with:

- Stress management
- Healthy eating
- Physical activity

## Patient Protection at the Doctor's Office

Ask your doctor if you have concerns about in-person care. Common safety changes include:

Check staff and patients for COVID symptoms daily

Enhanced, widescale disinfection

Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

Limits on number of patients seen

Social distancing in waiting rooms and infusion suites

## Care for Your Chronic Condition

Do not fear in-person testing and treatment (infusions, injections, labs, imaging)

Be open to telehealth visits for routine care

Follow your medication regimen as directed by your doctor

Keep adequate supplies of medications

Tell your doctor about flares or new symptoms

Track pain, fatigue and more symptoms at [ArthritisPower.org](https://www.ArthritisPower.org)

## Healthy Lifestyle Tips



Eat nutritious Mediterranean-style meals and snacks



Aim for 30 minutes of physical activity daily



Prioritize sleep



Manage stress with yoga, meditation, or other soothing activities

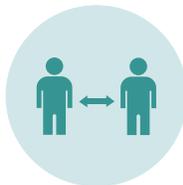


Don't smoke

## COVID-19 Prevention



Stay home as much as possible



Follow social distancing when with others



Wear a face covering in public



Wash hands thoroughly and often



Disinfect frequently touched surfaces

## Do Not



Sit this out and stop communicating



Ghost your doctor



Make changes to your medications without talking to your doctor



Ignore mental health issues like anxiety and depression

Join the CreakyJoints and Global Healthy Living Foundation's free COVID-19 Support Program for chronic illness patients and their families. We provide updated information, community support, and other resources tailored to your health and safety.

Visit: <https://www.ghlf.org/coronavirus-patient-support>