



Australian
Rheumatology
Association

Advice regarding Coronavirus (Covid-19)

Due to the increasing number of infections in Australia from Coronavirus (Covid-19), we are aware of growing concerns raised by patients with chronic illnesses and medications that affect their immune system. Currently, there is no specific advice for immune-compromised patients.

The Department of Health (DoH) advises:

- Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene.
- Self-isolation of asymptomatic travellers who have left/transited through China, South Korea and Iran (see DoH for up to date advice).
- If you have concerns about Covid-19 infection, ring your GP/health clinic or hospital before arriving at the clinic or hospital.

Additionally, we would advise

- Flu vaccination when available and appropriate (early April).
- Consider pneumococcal vaccination in appropriate patients
- If you have questions about your immune suppressing medications, contact your rheumatologist/Immunologist or other prescribing specialist for advice.

Currently, there is no need to stockpile medications as our medications are sourced widely.

More information:

For the latest advice, information and resources, please refer to Department of Health. (<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-resources>). There are resources available for both health professionals and public. There are also resources available in Farsi and Chinese.

Numbers to call – National Coronavirus Health Information Line 1800 020 080 – operates 24 hours, seven days a week. If translation or interpreting services needed, call 131 450.

The phone number of your state or territory public health agency is available at <https://www.health.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/local-state-and-territory-health-departments>