

COVID-19: Frequently Asked Questions for Infusion Patients

PLEASE NOTE: This document contains general information which may not be applicable to all patients, facilities, communities, and circumstances.

- Infusion providers are encouraged to modify the content to reflect information, which is accurate and specific to your facility, institutional policy, and your local/state health department recommendations.
- Patients are encouraged to contact their healthcare provider with additional questions or for more specific guidance.

My community is experiencing an outbreak of COVID-19, and I know my medication can make me more likely to get sick. Should I skip my infusions until this outbreak is over?

Different infusion therapies affect the immune system in different ways, which means some medications will weaken the immune system more than others. Also, it is important to remember that infusion medications are meant to be given on a set schedule to control the progression of disease. For this reason, it is important to **communicate with your provider to discuss your specific case and determine a plan that balances the risks and benefits of receiving your prescribed therapy** during a community outbreak of COVID-19. As always, you should not stop receiving your infusions without first consulting your healthcare team.

What should I do if I am experiencing fever, cough or other signs of illness and have an upcoming appointment at an infusion center?

Many of the treatments administered at infusion centers work with your immune system to control your disease, so much of the time you should not receive your treatment if you are experiencing any type of illness. In areas with community transmission, your provider may also want to know if someone in your household or a close contact is sick. **Please call your infusion center or healthcare provider BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT to discuss your situation** and determine the best way to keep you healthy and prevent spreading illness to others.

What is my risk of getting COVID-19 at my infusion center?

Infusion centers are experienced in caring for patients with weakened immune systems, so most likely they already have infection prevention plans in place to keep patients safe. Infection prevention plans are used all year, every year, to protect patients and healthcare workers from



INFO@INFUSIONCENTER.ORG

3307 NORTHLAND DR. SUITE 160 | AUSTIN, TEXAS 78731

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illnesses like the common cold and the flu. Your infusion center's Infection Prevention Plan should include things like:

- Disinfecting all patient care equipment (i.e. blood pressure cuffs, infusion chairs, IV pumps) between patient use
- Disinfection of frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, phones, check-in area pens and clipboards, faucets, etc.
- Screening patients and staff for respiratory illnesses and potential exposure
- Limiting or restricting visitors

Should I wear a mask when I am out in public to protect myself from COVID-19?

The CDC does not currently recommend that the general public wear face masks or respirators to protect themselves from COVID-19. Person-to-person spread of respiratory illnesses like COVID-19 usually occurs from close contact (within 6 feet). Additionally, face masks supply is limited, and masks are needed for patients with COVID-19 illness and the families and healthcare workers caring for infected patients.

How can I protect myself from COVID-19?

The best way to protect yourself from COVID-19 is to use the same everyday strategies recommended to prevent the spread of similar illnesses like the common cold or the flu:

- [Wash your hands](#) frequently
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Practice social distancing
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and immediately throw it away. If a tissue is unavailable, use your bent elbow.
- Try to avoid touching your face (to keep germs out of your nose, mouth, and eyes)
- Clean frequently touched surfaces in your home with a household disinfectant
- Wash your hands. Yes, we've listed this twice! Handwashing is the very best way to prevent the spread of infection.

How do I wash my hands?

Okay, this may not technically be a "frequently asked question" but it should be—everyone can use a reminder! The following is from the CDC *Life is Better with Clean Hands* Campaign:

Follow these five steps every time:

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.



2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

If soap and water aren't available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



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