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## **BIOLOGICS, ORAL IMMUNOSUPPRESSANTS AND COVID-19**

Because this infection is so new, we do not have any hard data on whether biologics make patients susceptible to coronavirus infection or not. We do, however, have data from clinical trials which report other viral and respiratory infections. The numbers are small, but if there is any risk of susceptibility to other viral infections, the risk appears to be low with most of the biologics used for psoriasis.

Our clinic has not been discontinuing drugs that block IL-17 (Consentyx, Taltz and Siliq) or drugs that block IL-23 (ILumya, Skyrizi, Tremfya) because the risk appears to be very small.

It does appear that TNF blockers (Remicade, Enbrel, Humira and Cimzia) may make patients more susceptible to infections. If you are not able to self-isolate and would like to discuss switching to another biologic, please schedule a virtual telehealth appointment with us.

The medication Stelara blocks two molecules IL-12 and IL-23. It is thought that IL-12 may play a role in the development of viral infections. With this being said, it should be pointed out that in registries, Stelara has not been shown to increase infections although we currently don't have any data on the coronavirus in particular. If you'd like to schedule a visit during this time, we'd be happy to discuss whether or not it would be beneficial to switch you to a different medication that only blocks IL-23. The newer medications that only block IL-23 can be more effective as well as blocking less of the immune system, so this is something to consider.

If you are on a TNF blocker or on Stelara please be extra cautious about protecting yourself. This includes things like ensuring you stay home as much as possible; if you must go out, wearing a mask, being sure to maintain at least 6 feet from others at all times, washing hands frequently, not touching your face and closely watching for any symptoms to develop. If you would like to make a switch, discuss taking a break from your medication or have any other questions about this, please schedule an appointment.

For patients on oral medications Cellcept (mycophenolate mofetil), methotrexate, cyclosporine and prednisone, these are truly immunosuppressive. You must absolutely take extreme precautions to avoid exposure to virus. Please consider scheduling a visit to discuss possible alternatives.

Aprelimast (Otezla) is a photodiesterase inhibitor like caffeine and has not been associated with an increase in infections. Likewise acitretin (Soriatane) is related to vitamin A and is not immunosuppressive.

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For patients on Dupixent for atopic dermatitis, Dupixent is an immunomodulator, not immunosuppressive. It lowers elevated levels of a chemical called IL-4 to more normal levels and has not been associated with an increase of respiratory infections.

If you are currently on a biologic and are experiencing symptoms of a respiratory infection please hold your dose and do not restart until you are back to normal.

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