

**DEPARTMENT OF GASTROENTEROLOGY**  
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## **PATIENT SAFETY LETTER**

### **Important advice to keep you safe from coronavirus**

Dear Patient,

Your safety and the continued provision of care and treatment you need is a priority for us. This letter gives you advice on how to protect yourself and access the care and treatment that you need. The latest Government Guidelines have suggested that patients with inflammatory bowel disease should be grouped together into three risk categories. These are listed below and the appropriate recommendations are also listed below for your information.

#### **Low Risk:**

**No need for mandatory self-isolation.** Patients on the following medications will fall into this category:

- 5-ASA therapy (all brands of Mesalazine eg Salofalk, Asacol, Octasa, Pentasa, Balsalazide, sulphasalazine)
- Rectal therapies
- Orally-administered, topically-acting steroids (Beclamethasone, Budesonide)
- Therapies for bile acid diarrhoea (Cholestyramine, Colesevelam, Colestipol)
- Anti-diarrhoeals (eg. Loperamide)
- Antibiotics for bacterial overgrowth or perianal disease

#### **Moderate / Intermediate Risk:**

**Recommend enhanced social distancing.** Patients on the following medication will fall into this category:

- Ustekinumab ( Stelara)
- Vedolizumab (Entyvio)
- Methotrexate
- Anti-TNF monotherapy (Infliximab, Adalimumab-Hyrimoz, Golimumab)
- Thiopurines (Azathioprine, 6-Mercaptopurine)
- Janus Kinase (JAK) inhibitors (Tofacitinib- Xeljanz)
- Calcineurin inhibitors (Tacrolimus, Cyclosporine )

- Combination therapy in stable patients (combination of two therapies may increase risk over monotherapy)
- Immunosuppressive / biological trial medication.

### **Highest risk:**

**Advise mandatory shielding.** IBD patients who either have a co-morbidity (any respiratory condition, cardiac condition, diabetes, hypertension / and stroke) or are over 70-year-old and are taking therapy for IBD listed above in the moderate-risk category and IBD patients of any age regardless of co-morbidity who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- On oral or IV steroid equivalent to equal or more than 20mg per day (only whilst on that dose).
- New induction therapy with combination therapy (started biologic therapy within six weeks)
- Moderate to severely active disease despite immunosuppressants / biologics.
- Short gut syndrome requiring nutritional support
- Requirement for parenteral nutrition

Guidance regarding **mandatory shielding** and also **enhanced social distancing** will follow the standard Public Health Advice issued by the Government. Further information on coronavirus including guidance from Public Health England can be found on the NHS.UK and GOV.UK websites:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely,

*Dictated and electronically approved by*

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