

FOR PATIENTS WHO ARE ON DUPILUMAB

In response to the current Coronavirus pandemic, we are responding to Government guidance and making changes to the way we offer dermatology services. This is primarily to protect patient safety by limiting travel and hospital visits where possible and to avoid congestion in our waiting rooms.

We are writing to you as you regularly attend the **complex ECZEMA clinic** in dermatology at the RVI.

From your medical records, it appears that you are taking a biologic drug that targets your immune system called DUPILUMAB. COVID-19 may pose a higher risk to you and therefore specific measures are advised.

Specific measures advised

There are two categories of measures: **very careful social distancing** and **shielding**

Asking people to stay at home and avoid contact is a form of social distancing. For people taking drugs that target the immune system, **very careful social distancing** is advised. You can read the social distancing guidance on the GOV.UK website. (Insert link as in [Read the social distancing guidance on the GOV.UK website](#).)

Shielding is a measure to protect people who are at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) by minimising all face to face interaction between those who are extremely vulnerable and others. **Shielding** is a step up from very careful social distancing. People advised to shield should not leave their home for 12 weeks (current estimate until late June 2020). If you fall within this group, you should have received a letter from the RVI and/or your GP. You can read the shielding guidance on the GOV.UK website ([Read the shielding guidance on the GOV.UK website](#)) If you think you fall within this group but have not received a letter please let us know by email, nuth.biologicsqueries@nhs.net or telephone on 0191 282 4783

Should I stop my medicine?

Currently, we do **not** advise you stop your medicine without prior discussion with your specialist doctor. Stopping your treatment could worsen your skin condition resulting in need for hospital treatment. We are carefully monitoring the situation and the national and international recommendations.

On the other hand, if you develop symptoms of Coronavirus infection or if a member of your household has symptoms of Coronavirus infection and you are self-isolating, you should not administer any doses of biologics/immunosuppressant during this period until it is clear you are well. The exception to this is if you are taking corticosteroids (prednisolone or hydrocortisone tablets) as this should not be stopped abruptly.

Your next appointments and injections

NEXT STEP:

Please do not come to your next appointment unless otherwise instructed.

We are aiming to minimise the number of patients that need to come to the RVI until further notice. We will check your records and see if you need any blood tests. If you do we will contact you.

If you normally receive your injections at the hospital, you can still attend the RVI to receive your injections.

We will make contact with you to arrange an appointment for this, which may differ from your original timeslot (as we are trying to space appointments out to reduce congestion in the department).

If you normally receive a 3 or 4 month supply of injections, receipt of these will depend on the following factors:

- 1. If you are not “shielding” we would ask that you collect a prepared prescription from the Dermatology Outpatients Department and take this to the hospital pharmacy as usual.**
- 2. If you are in the “shielding” category of patients and have a friend or relative who could nominate as a “proxy” to collect the medication on your behalf, this can be collected in the same fashion as point 1.**
- 3. If you are in the shielding category of patients and do not have a suitable proxy to assist in the delivery of Dupilumab, we can arrange hospital courier delivery of the medication.**

If you have nominated a proxy to collect the medication on your behalf please ensure they have a suitable cool bag to keep the medicine in the right conditions in transit.

Please indicate to us whether you require a fresh sharps bin to dispose needles safely, and we will also arrange for this to be sent out to you.

If you are suffering any problems, then we would be happy to arrange a telephone or face to face consultation for you.

**If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us via email:
nuth.biologicsqueries@nhs.net or on 0191 282 4783.**