

Monash MS Clinic advice regarding Covid-19 in March 2020

Many people with MS are on treatments which modify or suppress the immune system. Some of these treatments can increase the risk of infections, while substantially reducing the chance of an MS clinical relapse.

Betaseron, Rebif, Avonex, Plegriid and Copaxone are not likely to increase the risk of developing Covid-19 infection (coronavirus). We recommend no change if you are taking one of these therapies.

Tecfidera and Aubagio are also unlikely to significantly increase the infection risk.

The more effective MS therapies probably increase the risk of Covid-19 infection and these include Gilenya, Mavenclad, Lemtrada, Tysabri and Ocrevus. However if you stop these treatments you increase the chance of a disabling rebound MS relapse. For most people on these therapies we recommend no change, but please discuss with your neurologist the most suitable dosing of these treatments for you. Do not stop MS treatment without speaking to our clinic.

Most importantly follow the advice given by Australian health authorities about how to protect yourself from Covid-19 infection. Consider if it is safe for you to continue to work and if so, what precautions need to be taken. Practice social distancing and do not embark on a holiday. Medical appointments can generally be achieved by web-based telemedicine during the pandemic (Monash will contact you with the details of this service).

Please be sure to have your annual influenza vaccination from your GP, and also ask for pneumococcal vaccination.

If you develop a fever, cough or difficulty breathing then attend your closest Covid-19 clinic (found at all major public hospitals) or your GP. Contact your neurologist if you develop Covid-19 infection for further advice about MS medication.