



June 10, 2020

RE: COVID19 & Immunocompromised Employees with Inflammatory Bowel Disease

To Whom It May Concern:

Crohn's and Colitis Canada is a national health charity dedicated to finding the cures and improving the lives of children and adults affected by Crohn's and colitis – the two main forms of **inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)**. Since 1974, our organization has been supporting IBD patients through funding research, raising awareness of these diseases, advocating for policies to help people with IBD live healthy and productive lives, and offering education and support programs.

Please note that IBD is **NOT** irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and is instead a chronic *immune system* disease that affects 1 in 140 Canadians of all ages, gender and ethnic background. Canada has one of the highest prevalence in the world and there are no known cures for these diseases.

When COVID-19 hit the Canadian population, Crohn's and Colitis Canada formed a COVID-19 Task Force comprised of IBD and infectious diseases experts. Our Task Force has been meeting weekly since March 19th to keep abreast of COVID-19 issues as they relate to IBD patients. One area the Task Force has been closely monitoring is evidence on susceptibility of IBD patients to contract COVID-19. The guidance for patients with IBD is available at crohnsandcolitis.ca/covid19.

Our instructions for patients about the re-opening of schools and places of employment are available here: <https://crohnsandcolitis.ca/About-Crohn-s-Colitis/COVID-19-and-IBD/Guidance/Reopening-of-Schools-and-Economy>

Based on current evidence, the Task Force is recommending the following groups of people avoid engaging in non-essential activities outside the home, especially if school/work does not allow for adequate physical distancing (>6 feet or >2 metres) from other people if patients currently have the following characteristics:

1. Taking systemic corticosteroid medication such as prednisone; or
2. Has severe active inflammation due to IBD; or
3. Has moderate/severe malnutrition; or
4. Using parenteral nutrition (TPN or intravenous nutrition through a central line); or
5. Has other comorbidities that put the patient at risk for severe COVID-19 (as per local public health recommendations).

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600-60 St. Clair Avenue East Toronto, ON Canada M4T 1N5

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If this letter is accompanied by a letter from the patient's physician that confirms at least one of the above circumstances, we respectfully suggest that you consider providing one of the below measures to the patient:

1. Modified work duties to ensure physical distancing from other people (>6 feet or >2 metres) is maintained; and
2. Hold virtual meetings instead of in-person meetings; and
3. Encourage others at the workplace/school to wear non-medical masks; and
4. Allow the patient to take actions to ensure physical distancing from other people.

Sincerely,

Dr. Gilaad Kaplan, MD, MPH, FRCPC

Dr. Eric Benchimol, MD, PhD, FRCPC

Co-Chairs, Crohn's and Colitis Canada COVID19 Task Force

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