

## COVID-19 and patients receiving hormone therapies

### Information for families of children and adolescents receiving human growth hormone

In the current global situation concerning coronavirus COVID-19, we understand many families have questions about the risk to children receiving human growth hormone therapy. Information from overseas indicates that the risk of severe disease in children as a consequence of COVID-19 is minimal. There have been very few cases of children or adolescents becoming significantly unwell. The people most at risk of getting the virus are those who have recently travelled overseas, or been in contact with someone who has the illness. The people most at risk of significant illness are the elderly with chronic disease.

Children receiving human growth hormone therapy are not immunocompromised. They are therefore not more prone to catching various infections than other children. It is anticipated though that COVID-19 will eventually infect many people. If this occurs your child may have minimal symptoms or develop a flu-like illness. If the latter occurs standard sick day management principles apply such as fluids and temperature relief with paracetamol. In the unlikely event that your child becomes significantly unwell with breathing difficulties we would, as always, recommend seeking medical attention. Otherwise standard precautions to prevent spread of any respiratory illness are recommended. This includes taking extra care with frequent hand washing with soap and water or an alcohol based hand rub, covering coughs and sneezes and avoiding contact with anyone with flu like symptoms. Immunization for seasonal influenza is strongly recommended.

We have contacted the various companies that manufacture and distribute human growth hormone. They do not report any issues with supply. *We emphasise though that human growth hormone therapy is not a life-saving critical therapy.* In the event that we need to prioritise our activities to other areas of endocrine care that are more critical, there may be some delays in processing. If this occurs we ask for your patience and understanding.

Currently the advice from the Victorian Department of Health is that schools should remain open. The Premier though has indicated that at some point in the future schools might close and that there will be no penalty if parents decide not to send their child to school before that time. There is no evidence though that parents of children receiving human growth hormone should consider things differently from their other families. The choice whether to send your child to school or not is an individual one.

We recognise that families and children may be feeling stressed and anxious. We also recognise that the situation is changing rapidly and that recommendations are also changing. We will endeavour to deal with all queries as efficiently as we can and in a respectful manner. As always we also expect that families will interact with our staff in a respectful manner <https://www.rch.org.au/your-rights/>.

The situation regarding COVID-19 is evolving and changing rapidly, so our understanding of the risks in relation to children may change. Please keep up to date by accessing the Victorian Government Department of Health and Human Services website at <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

If you are planning to travel, please follow the travel health advice from the Australian Government at <https://www.smarttraveller.gov.au/>

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