Important Information about COVID-19 and Research Participation

At the University of Rochester our primary responsibility related to research is to protect the safety of our research subjects.

COVID-19 refers to the Coronavirus that is being spread across people in our communities. This document provides you with important information about COVID-19, and to tell you about ways your study participation might change because of COVID-19 related risk.

If you are considering joining a study at this time or are currently enrolled in a study, it is important that you consider the following information to determine if study participation is right for you at this time.

How is COVID-19 spread? COVID-19 is a respiratory virus spread by respiratory droplets, mainly from person-to-person. This can happen between people who are in close contact with one another (less than 6 feet). It is also possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object (such as a doorknob or counter surface) that has the virus on it, then touching their mouth, nose or eyes.

Can COVID-19 be prevented? The best way to prevent getting COVID-19 is to avoid exposure to the virus. You can minimize the risk of exposure by washing your hands frequently, covering your mouth and nose with mask while around others, and practicing “social distancing”, which includes avoiding large gatherings, maintaining 6 feet of distance between yourself and others, and refraining from close contact with others (e.g., shaking hands).

If you decide to participate in research through the University of Rochester, you will be provided a face mask to wear during study visits (if you do not already have one) and study staff will practice physical distancing during study visits to the extent possible. For additional information, please refer to the flyer ‘What you can expect during a study visit in the Era of COVID-19?’ It is important to understand that since study participation may include increased travel outside of your home and increased exposure to others within a clinical care or research site environment it may increase your exposure to COVID-19. At this time there is no vaccination to prevent COVID-19 infection.

What are the risks of COVID-19? For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, and may lead to death.

Who is most at risk? Individuals over 60 and with chronic conditions such as cancer, diabetes and lung disease have the highest rates of severe disease from the infection.

How could your participation in research change as a result of COVID-19? There are several ways we try to minimize your risk. If possible, we limit the number of times you have to...
come to a clinical care or research site. Before each visit and on the day of each visit, we ask every research subject if they have the symptoms of COVID-19 or have been in close contact with anyone who has or had COVID-19. During your visits, we try to reduce the time you are exposed to other people as much as possible. If you are suspected to be positive for COVID-19, there may be last minute changes to how research procedures are performed (such as a change from an in-person visit to a telephone call) or cancellations of research tests or procedures to ensure your safety. For additional information, please refer to the flyer ‘What you can expect during a study visit in the Era of COVID-19?’ It is possible that your study visit will be put on hold or stopped because of COVID-19.

The information related to risks of COVID-19 changes every day. The leaders at the University of Rochester are monitoring these risks and deciding how these risks should change our research. If you have questions about COVID-19 and your participation in research, please talk to your study team.