

Covid-19 Shielding Clarification

23 September 2020

A letter to CLL patients from the UK CLL Forum

The UK CLL Forum is the umbrella organisation for CLL specialists, researchers, scientists and related charities providing treatment and support across the UK. CLL Support is the partner charity representing and supporting CLL Patients and the community. As a result of the growing infection rate and the latest Government tightening of restrictions we wanted to share following advice, and we would urge all CLL patients to follow the recommendations.

Why is this letter necessary?

Some CLL patients may be unclear about what this next phase of raised precautions means for them, in the current situation. This letter clarifies the position.

If you are a CLL patient, you have a damaged immune system, even if you are on 'watch and wait'. This means that you are in the very vulnerable group and makes it more likely that you will be unable to fight off infections. The Covid-19 virus is believed to be very easily transmitted and catching the virus could lead to very serious complications. The UK Government website has comprehensive information and guidance and can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Our recommendations

These are our strong recommendation for **all** CLL patients:

- If you work, try to work from home. If you must travel to a place of employment ensure you discuss with your employers all options to protect you from infection.
- If you do have to work and cannot work from home, please discuss with your employees how to make your work as Covid safe as possible. Here is a government website with workplace guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>
- You should plan all necessary trips carefully ensuring facemasks, distancing and washing of hands after each trip.
- If you do need visits from people who provide essential support to you such as healthcare, personal support with daily needs or social care, they may continue, but:
- All people coming to your house should wash their hands on arriving at your house and frequently while they are there. You should do the same.

Executive Committee:

Dr Renata Walewska (Chair)
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Dr Sunil Iyengar
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- Have supplies delivered and left at the doorstep. Patients should wash their hands having opened their post each morning and wash their hands after they've put any delivered shopping away
- Keep at least 2 metres from any delivery person or other people who may call.
- If you are living with other people, they should follow government guidelines and hygiene practices.

What to do if you feel you have caught the virus

If you think you might be experiencing symptoms or have been exposed to the virus, you should:

- Phone NHS 111. Make sure you tell the person you speak to that you have leukaemia and are a high-risk patient.
- Inform your haematology care team so that they are aware.

Treatment

After discussion with you, your consultant may recommend deferring or delaying treatment if they feel it is in your best interest. Please do not stop any treatment for CLL without discussing this with your consultant or a member of their team first.

On behalf of the UK CLL Forum and CLL Support, we hope you will remain safe and well. The best way to do this is to follow the guidance above. We are working closely with CLL Support to help you. Our web sites are <https://ukcllforum.org/> www.clisupport.org.uk/

Stay Safe

Renata Walewska

Chair CLL Forum

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