

An die assoziierten Praxen und Ambulanzen  
der regionalen Psoriasisnetze PsoNet und  
des Deutschen Psoriasis-Registers PsoBest

**Förderverein PsoNet in Deutschland e. V.**  
Verein zur Förderung der interdisziplinären  
Zusammenarbeit in der Versorgung der  
Psoriasispatienten

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## **Recommendations for systemic therapy in persons with psoriasis during the pandemic phase of SARS-CoV-2 (corona virus)**

Dear Colleagues!

Through the German registry PsoBest and the PsoNet network we receive numerous questions if in the current phase of SARS-CoV-2 outbreak and the associated respiratory syndrome COVID-19 special measures for people with psoriasis undergoing systemic therapy are required.

For your information we enclose a respective statement and patient information to be used in practice and/or hospital. The statement is based on currently available evidence and an expert consensus on the basis of data from published literature. Please note that systematic research data regarding the consequences of SARS-CoV-2 infection do not exist yet and the reference is subject to new information. The recommendations given should be adapted to the individual patient situation

Do not hesitate to contact us for further questions.

Sincerely yours,

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for the task forces of PsoNet, PsoBest und DPB  
requested by BVDD and DDG

## **Recommendations for systemic therapy in persons with psoriasis during the pandemic phase of SARS-CoV-2 (corona virus)**

- After review of available literature and of data from registries and pharmacovigilance there is no additional risk for viral infections in people with psoriasis under current treatment according to label with the following drugs/drug-classes: IL-17-, IL-23-, and IL-12/23- blockers, fumaric acid esters, apremilast, methotrexate.
- For TNF-blockers a slightly increased risk may be possible in particular for infliximab. For treatment with ciclosporin there is no conclusive data yet. In prior viral endemic episodes, there was no significantly increased risk for complications in exposed transplant patients considering additional protective measures in this patient group. Caution is required in elderly patients and in patients with comorbidity particularly diabetes mellitus type II, and COPD and in patients with known susceptibility for infections during current therapy.
- In accordance with the comprehensive centers for inflammation medicine in Kiel, Lübeck, and Hamburg we recommend to continue treatment with the drugs mentioned above for people with psoriasis requiring systemic therapy. Initiation of a new systemic treatment with the aforementioned drugs is possible and should be based on informed consent, benefit-risk-balancing and detailed patient information. When starting TNF-blockers or ciclosporin individual risk factors for infections must be considered and a careful follow-up is required (cave: patients using TNF-blockers may not get fever!).
- In case of acute fever and respiratory symptoms or in the event of a clinical suspicion of Covid-19-infection all individuals undergoing systemic treatment for psoriasis should follow current recommendations of the Robert-Koch-Institute (RKI) for advanced diagnostics and the next application of the drug should be postponed days to weeks according to the individual patient situation.
- In general, we recommend vaccination against pneumococci. As the season for influenza is fading in spring vaccination with tetravalent dead vaccine is recommended only in individual cases. The respective recommendations for dead vaccines must be followed.
- All people with psoriasis undergoing systemic therapy should be educated about preventive measures regarding hygiene and social behavior. In case of newly occurring symptoms or in case of doubt patients should contact their treating physician preferably by mail, fax or phone.

## **Task force of the advisory boards of PsoBest, PsoNet and Deutscher Psoriasisbund eV. (German psoriasis patient association)**

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## **General recommendations for people with psoriasis and their partners/relatives during the pandemic phase of SARS-CoV-2 infection (corona virus)**

After infections with corona virus have been classified as pandemic by the WHO the virologist Alexander Kekulé\* have raised the „**Personal Alert Level**“ (**PAL**) for Germany from yellow to orange that is the third highest level. At this stage according to the scale personal protection against the virus is required. In contrast to measures emphasized by the WHO and local governments the PAL recommendations apply to individual people and consist of 5 defined action points for personal protection.

### **1. Do not get too close to other faces**

To avoid droplet infection, it is recommended to keep a distance of 2 meters to other people because corona virus can enter the body through mucous membranes of eyes, mouth, and nose. Additional protection is by wearing glasses and/or by using a cloth that covers nose and mouth. The cloth can be reused after washing at 60°C.

### **2. Clean your hands before touching your face or eating**

Corona viruses can survive on different surfaces for many hours. If people hold a handle covered by secretion of an infected person and is rubbing the eyes or is touching food with the hands, they can be self-infected by smear infection. Reflexive touching of the face should be avoided. Regular handwashing is recommended by virologists.

### **3. Hug people only if you want to exchange viruses**

Be careful these days who to hug or kiss because of an easy transmission of the virus from an infected to a healthy person. Among partners and own kids close contact is possible because the likelihood of getting infected while living in the same household is high. It is definitively not recommended to visit grandparents.

### **4. Regard public indoor facilities as contaminated**

In public space like public transport, restaurants, or shops and other open indoor areas corona viruses can be on all surfaces. When returning home after visiting such areas clothes should immediately be placed on the wardrobe and hands should be washed. Before going to bed hairs should be washed if they may have been in contact with potentially contaminated surfaces.

### **5. Avoid contact to other people if you have cough or fever**

During the corona pandemic people should not go to work, school, or kindergarten, use public transport or visit areas in which people come together if they cough or have fever. Patients receiving TNF-blockers should be aware of the fact that they may not get fever and therefore need to pay attention to additional symptoms.

And here is a very important advice: Keep calm! Even if you get infected despite all preventive measures your chance to survive is more than 99%.