

# CCF (India) Advisory

1. IBD patients on immune suppressants, malnourished IBD patients and elderly IBD patients in particular are at greater risk.
2. The patients need not stop their medications. Many patients ask if they should stop medication. However, none of these should be stopped. Having said that, it may be better to get them off steroids if possible.
3. The chances of acquiring viral infection are least while a patient is on 5 ASA and maximum while a patient is on steroids or tofacitinib, followed by azathioprine, 6 mercaptopurine, methotrexate and thereafter biological monoclonal antibodies. This data is based on risk for other viral infections and hence extrapolated for COVID19. The thiopurines take months to be eliminated from the body and hence stopping them will not help in the short term. At present there is no recommendation to stop biologicals.
4. At present we would not advise stopping medications as the risk of disease flare far outweighs the chance of contracting COVID-19.
5. Elective endoscopy procedures in IBD patients like surveillance colonoscopy should be avoided.
6. Patients on immunosuppressants and biologicals should be counselled to take strict precautions:
  - i) Social Distancing
  - ii) Frequent washing of hands
  - iii) Seek medical attention in case of fever, cough or difficult breathing
  - iv) Avoiding visits to crowded places
  - v) Avoiding hospital visits unless essential
  - vi) Telephonic consultations with doctor rather than visit, if possible

Hope you all find this advisory helpful.

Best regards,

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