

COVID-19 & Cystic Fibrosis

People with cystic fibrosis (CF) may have anxiety about their health during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there isn't any evidence to suggest that those with CF are more likely to contract COVID-19 according to Dr. Jennifer Taylor-Cousar, co-director of the Adult Cystic Fibrosis Program at National Jewish Health. "What we do know is that those with CF are more at risk to have severe effects of COVID-19 on their lungs."



Cystic fibrosis patients are used to social distancing and taking extra precautions to keep from getting sick. In fact, these habits may be the reason that fewer than expected cystic fibrosis patients have reported contracting COVID-19. Dr. Taylor-Cousar says, "Overall, people with CF aren't catching COVID-19 frequently, most likely because they are used to washing their hands frequently, staying home and staying six feet away from other people."

Routine Care for Cystic Fibrosis during COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has made getting treatment for cystic fibrosis at health care centers harder. The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation recommends that patients see their doctors quarterly for an in depth checkup. During the pandemic, according to Dr. Taylor-Cousar, many health care providers are using telehealth to connect with CF patients. "Telehealth let's doctors give patients advice about their medications, and anything that needs to change because of mild COVID symptoms without the patient having to leave their house," she explained.

COVID-19 Treatment for CF Patients

If a cystic fibrosis patient does become sick with COVID-19, the patient's treatment may look the same as a patient without CF.

"If it's only a mild cough and only a little fever, doctors will manage the symptoms the same way that they would manage people without CF. So, they could take Tylenol or Advil. If they started to have increased symptoms, we would have them increase their therapies," Dr. Taylor-Cousar explained.

As COVID-19 symptoms get worse for a cystic fibrosis patient, they may need to go to the hospital for more intense treatment. Dr. Taylor-Cousar recommends that CF patients make a plan with their provider to respond to COVID-19 symptoms just in case.

Healthy Precautions to Take

Even though the [CDC masking guidelines](#) have eliminated the need for fully vaccinated people to wear a mask in most places, people with cystic fibrosis need to continue to take some precautions to stay healthy and prevent catching COVID-19 or other diseases.

- Wear a facemask when you're near others who are unvaccinated.
- Maintain social distancing of at least six feet.
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water regularly.
- Avoid crowds and contact with anyone who may be sick.
- [Disinfect frequently touched surfaces often](#).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

Post-Transplant

If you are post-transplant, you have a lower immune response to vaccines and higher risk for severe disease from COVID-19. Talk with your CF care team or your transplant team about any additional precautions you need to take.

Cystic fibrosis may make the effects of COVID-19 more severe for some people, so it's important to continue to lower your risk of contracting the disease. If you have questions about your individual situation, please talk to your CF care team.

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