

# BEST PRACTICES IN DIAGNOSING AND TREATING ALPHA-1 PATIENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS FROM CANADA

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**“Please make sure all of your COPD patients, and especially your alpha patients, have an action plan and know what to do.”**



## Risk to patients

Alpha-1 patients do not have a greater risk of developing COVID-19; however, they seem to be at risk of suffering from **more severe consequences of the infection**

- While there is no data specifically on AATD and COVID-19, patients with comorbidities – including COPD – struggle more. It is hypothesised that people starting with a lower lung function are less able to tolerate the infection



## Current best practices

Social distancing, use of masks and **minimising exposure** are recommended precautions

- Patients with alpha-1, even with minimal lung disease, are advised to stay home

**Patients and their daily contacts**, no matter their age, are advised to **get the influenza vaccine**

In terms of on-going care, patients should **continue to follow their treatment plan**

- Maintenance of inhaled medication for those with pulmonary disease
- Action plan to treat flare-ups

Recommend patients **acquire an oximeter** and that they check their oxygen levels

- AATD patients are prone to develop hypoxaemia, which is very dangerous and something that happens insidiously with COVID-19 infections



## Augmentation therapy

Continue with **augmentation therapy**

- It's important to remind patients that the most important time to get their augmentation infusion is when they are sick, when they're in the middle of an exacerbation

Where possible, patients are encouraged to adopt **home infusion\***



## Patient communication

Patients should be advised that **it is safe to go to the clinics**

- Screening is carried out to make sure there's a low risk of exposure to COVID-19

Try to address the concerns of patients and give them **balanced information**

- Also, try to make sure to cover the practical details: supply of medication, action plan, etc.