

## **NYGH Information for research subjects about the novel coronavirus (COVID-19)**

*Last updated: March 19, 2020*

At North York General Hospital, your health and safety are our priority as a research participant. We are promoting social distancing to prevent and slow the spread of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. We are carefully considering what this means for your research participation; and have put together the following answers to potential questions. Please contact your research coordinator and/or study doctor with any additional questions. As the situation could change over time, please also consult the NYGH website COVID-19 page for up-to-date information.

- **Should I continue to come into North York General Hospital as a research participant?**
  - Your health and safety are our priority, and we are promoting social distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Some research participants are unwell and/or have weakened immune systems, so many studies without treatment visits are to be temporarily delayed at NYGH.
  - If you're undergoing treatment on a clinical trial, you should consult your doctor.
  - Patients in any trial or study should contact the study researcher or coordinator, who will know what to do (ie. telephone visit, reschedule, etc.). Focus groups, interview, or survey studies may still continue by phone or online. This social distancing may help slow the spread of the virus.
  - These changes are to help stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus; and do not mean there have been any changes in the overall safety of your research participation or your study drug, if you're on a clinical trial.
  
- **Is it safe to come to the hospital?**
  - At this time, centralized screening procedures are being put in place for entrance into the hospital. Please come to the hospital if you are in need of emergency medical care or are coming for a treatment study visit for a clinical trial, after talking with your study coordinator. Otherwise, social distancing is a preventative action you can take that may help keep you healthy.
  
- **If the situation changes, will I be notified?**
  - Study coordinators and your doctor can discuss next steps with you at any time; and will let you know when there are updates.
  
- **Should I come to my appointment if I am feeling unwell?**
  - If you are feeling generally unwell, or if you are experiencing any of the symptoms listed below, please call and reschedule study treatment-related appointments.
  - Symptoms to self-screen for include:
    - a new or worsening cough, fever, chills, shortness of breath (worse than normal), severe headaches (worse than normal), unexplained muscle aches, unexplained extreme fatigue, vomiting, diarrhea, rashes.
  - We also ask that you call to reschedule study treatment-related appointments if you have been in close contact with anyone who has the above symptoms (i.e. live in the same house or provide caregiving).
  
- **If I was feeling unwell but now feel better, is it safe for me to come to the hospital?**
  - Please do not come to the hospital until you have been symptom-free and have self-isolated for at least two weeks (14 days), unless to seek emergency medical attention, or to see your primary care provider. Even if you feel better, it may be possible to spread the virus to others. By asking you to stay home, we are trying to limit how many people get sick in our community.
  
- **Am I required to keep my appointment as a research subject? What if I don't want to?**
  - You are not required to keep appointments as a research subject. Research study participation is always voluntary.

- If you have any concerns about your appointment, or don't feel comfortable coming to the hospital at this time, please let your study coordinator know.
- **What is NYGH doing to manage the novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?**
  - At NYGH, enhanced screening is taking place of patients at points of entry to the hospital, including clinics, Emergency Departments and research study locations.
  - Specifically, we aim to quickly identify patients who have signs and symptoms of infection.
  - If a patient is suspected of having COVID-19, due to their symptoms and travel history, they will be isolated from others and rapid viral testing will be started.
  - Our Infection Prevention and Control department is in close contact with Public Health Ontario and other agencies to help guide decision-making. They receive frequent updates and we are actively monitoring the situation.
  - Please check the NYGH website for up-to-date information for research participants regarding COVID-19