



Canadian Hemophilia Society
Help Stop the Bleeding

COVID-19: CHS Message to the Canadian bleeding disorder community

[Update: July 8, 2020]

The Canadian Hemophilia Society (CHS) has been following the rapidly evolving COVID-19 crisis and is updating our community regularly via our various communication channels. We recognize that people with bleeding disorders and their caregivers may have questions related to their health care and treatment products.

Supply of factor concentrates, non-factor therapies, home inventory

The CHS remains in contact with the manufacturers and distributors—Canadian Blood Services and Héma-Québec— of factor products and non-factor therapies for the Canadian market. Nothing has changed since our last communication in April. **Inventories are at or above normal levels in Canada. Keeping very large home inventories is not necessary.**

Pick-up of factor concentrates, non-factor therapies

As everybody knows, public health authorities have issued instructions on “social distancing.” These public health measures have meant changes to the normal pick-up of home therapies. **Measures vary from hospital to hospital. The CHS recommends that you contact your bleeding disorder treatment centre directly for instructions.** Ask them:

- Has your hospital put in place home delivery for treatment products for people who normally use public transportation and those at increased risk of COVID-19 complications, for example ...
 - immune suppression?
 - cardiovascular disease?
 - high blood pressure?
 - kidney disease?
 - obesity?
 - diabetes?
 - age (over 60)?
- If home delivery is not offered to you, what is the best way to pick up inventory while maintaining “physical distance”? For example, can you meet the hospital staff outside, pop open the trunk of your car and have the product placed in the trunk?
 - Remember: physical distancing will protect you, your family and your health care providers.
 - Wear a mask.

Comprehensive care

At a time when some of the staff in bleeding disorder treatment centres are working from home, or may even be re-assigned to other duties, **it is more important than ever to stay healthy**. This means:

- Keep in touch with your treatment centre teams via telephone, MyCBDR/iCHIP and other electronic media.
 - Report all bleeds and infusions to your care teams at the moment of infusion, thereby maintaining strong “virtual” contact, and helping keep track of inventories.
- For those on prophylaxis, follow your prescribed regimen exactly as recommended.
- Avoid activities that put you at higher risk for bleeding.
- Do not avoid seeking emergency care out of fear of infection. Hospitals are taking every precaution to keep people safe.

Safety of coagulation therapies

Coronaviruses similar to SARS-CoV-2 which is responsible for COVID-19—like SARS and MERS—have been well studied over the last 15 years. It has been clearly shown that the viral inactivation processes used for plasma derivatives, including plasma-derived factor concentrates, eliminate coronaviruses. **Factor products continue to be safe.**

Some people with bleeding disorders may require transfusions. There is no evidence at this time that the coronaviruses are transmitted through red blood cells, platelets or plasma. **Fresh blood components continue to be safe.**

If you have COVID-19

Having a bleeding disorder does not put a person at greater risk for serious complications of COVID-19.

Nevertheless, if you contract COVID-19, it is important that you contact your treatment centre for advice. This is especially critical if you have to be admitted to hospital for COVID-19. Your hematologist can then make sure that your underlying bleeding disorder is taken into account in your treatment.

Blood, platelet and plasma donation

Continuing to donate blood, platelets and plasma is critical at a time when many people who normally donate are urged to stay home to avoid exposure to COVID-19 or to protect others. Both Canadian Blood Services and Héma-Québec remind us that:

- It is safe to donate blood, platelets and plasma during the COVID-19 epidemic.
- Donations are critical for patients.
- Blood donors should book and keep their appointments to prevent shortages.

The CHS urges people to closely follow the recommendations of federal, provincial and local public health authorities to reduce risk to you and your loved ones.

**If you have any questions or concerns,
do not hesitate to write to us at chs@hemophilia.ca.**