

With the COVID-19 pandemic, we understand that many people with complex chronic diseases are concerned about their health and wellbeing. Patients with chronic medical conditions are more likely to experience more severe symptoms of COVID-19. The medical conditions that are associated with more severe symptoms include heart disease, lung disease, and diabetes, to name a few. There have been a number of studies showing that some people with CCDs have abnormalities in the immune system, in hormones involved in response to physical stresses to the body and in the ability of the body to produce or release energy, however we still do not know if patients with complex chronic diseases such as fibromyalgia, myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS) and Symptoms attributable to Lyme Disease are overall at increased risk. To be safe, we recommend patients with complex chronic diseases to take additional precautions.

Fatigue, malaise and muscle-type pain are often reported by people with acute infection by COVID-19. People with ME/CFS also often report a temporary worsening of their “ME” symptoms when they experience acute infections, even if otherwise relatively mild. More severe infections and indeed other diseases may take a significant toll in people with ME/CFS and other complex chronic diseases.

For those with ME and chronic fatigue syndrome and other CCDs, we cannot emphasise enough the importance of preventative measures. We therefore highly recommend that you follow public health recommendations ([BCCDC website](#)) and exert strict social distancing from others and hygiene measures. Please also ensure you follow guidance on self-isolation or quarantine if indicated.

- [Novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information for patients with chronic health conditions \(PDF\)](#)

For those who develop flu-like symptoms, again, please follow public health recommendations. Measures like acetaminophen for fever and home-remedies for cough, such as honey and lemon tea are appropriate for most. Other symptoms such as gastrointestinal upset, body pains and increasing fatigue and other ME-symptoms may also occur. If symptoms are more severe, and in particular, if you experience shortness of *breath* or other symptoms of severe disease please go to emergency. If in doubt contact your healthcare provider.

Psychological wellbeing is also extremely important, as it is for everyone going through prolonged periods of social isolation and stress. People with CCD may consider keeping regular daily schedules and appropriate sleeping times. Try to minimise social isolation by being in contact with others virtually and try to keep doing pleasurable things as much as possible and within your limits ([Mental Health Commission of Canada article](#)).

Keep safe and well!