Changes to Research Participation due to COVID-19

KEY POINTS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH PARTICIPANTS WHERE FACE-TO-FACE VISITS ARE HALTED.

At Johns Hopkins University our primary responsibility related to research is to protect the safety of our research participants.

COVID-19 refers to the Coronavirus that is being spread across people in our communities and can cause severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

Because study participation may include increased travel outside of your home and increased exposure to others within a clinical care environment or research site, for your safety we have decided that your face-to-face participation in our research protocol must stop temporarily.

The information related to risks of COVID-19 changes every day. We will keep you informed about further changes to your participation as we learn new information.

IF PARTICIPANTS HAVE QUESTIONS, HERE IS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

How is COVID-19 spread? COVID-19 is a respiratory virus spread by respiratory droplets, mainly from person-to-person. This can happen between people who are in close contact from one another (about 6 feet). It is also possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, then touching their mouth, nose or eyes.

Can COVID-19 be prevented? Current ways to minimize the risk of exposure to COVID-19 include “social distancing” which is a practice to decrease the potential for direct exposure to others who may have been exposed to COVID-19, for example by avoiding large gatherings or refraining from shaking hands with others. It is important to understand that since study participation may include increased travel outside of your home and increased exposure to others within a clinical care environment or research site it may increase your exposure to COVID-19. While there currently is no direct evidence that spending time in a health facility increases the risk of getting COVID-19, there might be a small increased risk.

What are the risks of COVID-19? For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia. While we are still learning about this virus, the information we have right now suggests that the percentage of infected people who might die from the virus is about 3%.

Who is most at risk? Individuals over 60 and with chronic conditions such as cancer, diabetes and lung disease have the highest rates of severe disease from the infection.

Are there treatments available? At this time there is no vaccination or proven treatment for the COVID-19 infection.