



Coronavirus & Arthritis

Hosts: Rebecca Gillett, MS OTR/L and Julie Eller

Guest Speaker: Michael George, MD, Rheumatologist & Epidemiologist, University of Pennsylvania

Coronavirus, and the disease it causes COVID-19, weighs on everyone's mind today. For those living with arthritis, the fear of the unknown is driving our urgent need to understand this new threat and what special risks we might have. The CDC has issued special guidance for those over 60 years old and those with severe medical conditions, but has not specifically mentioned immune suppression, autoimmune disease, inflammatory arthritis nor any of the drugs we take to control our disease, only increasing our uncertainty and anxiety.

So Julie and Rebecca hosted this special edition of the Live Yes! With Arthritis podcast to answer these and other urgent questions we all have. We are so pleased to have had leading expert Michael George, MD, a rheumatologist and epidemiologist at the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia,, who studies infections in patients with autoimmune disease. He answers the pressing questions on our minds.

Dr. George provided 3 top takeaways for all of us to remember:

1. This is an important problem we need to take seriously, and we'll see the numbers of people infected increase over next few weeks.
2. Majority who have been infected with the coronavirus and develop COVID-19, have mild illness and recover well. I expect the same for most people with autoimmune disease. Some, however, will have more severe illness.
3. Everyone should take precautions to protect themselves, including handwashing, disinfecting surfaces and avoiding close contact with others who may be sick.

Arthritis Foundation Resources:

- **Coronavirus and Arthritis Resources.** For the latest on coronavirus and arthritis and the information you need, visit our coronavirus resource center on [arthritis.org](https://www.arthritis.org/coronavirus).
- **Sign up for Email Updates.** There, you can sign up for email updates on new developments and essential information.

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- **Talk About Coronavirus with Others.** Go to the Live Yes! Online Community forum (sign in or register if it's your first time). Here you can share your coronavirus and arthritis thoughts, tips, stories, and ask Dr. Michael George questions in the special discussion forum. [Live Yes! Arthritis Online Community discussion forum](#). Join the online community to access the Hot Topics – Coronavirus forum. Dr. George is answering questions as he is able for a limited time, so join the discussion now!

Other Coronavirus Resources:

- **National Information.** For the most up-to-date information on coronavirus and COVID-19, visit the [CDC website](#). For information on your local/state situation, go to your local and state health department websites.

A Special Message from the Arthritis Foundation

Please Share Your Arthritis Experience. By giving 10 minutes to take the [Live Yes! INSIGHTS Assessment](#), you will make a difference for yourself and others living with pain from arthritis. Your participation will lead to more effective treatments and outcomes and targeted program development that will meet the needs of you and your community. With your help, we can shape a powerful agenda that fights for you.

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