

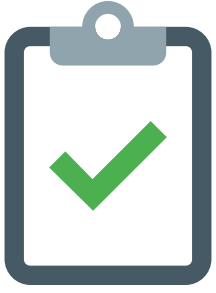


# COVID-19 Guidance for Chronic Pain Patients

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- Chronic pain patients may be more susceptible to COVID-19.
- Elderly patients and those with multiple comorbidities are particularly susceptible.
- Chronic opioid therapy may cause immune suppression in some patients.
- Use of steroids in interventional pain procedures may induce immune suppression.

Source: Recommendations on Chronic Pain Practice during the COVID-19 Pandemic, Shanthanna H, Cohen SP, Strand N, Lobo CA, Eldabe S, Bhatia A, Narouze S. [www.asra.com/covid-19/cpguidance](http://www.asra.com/covid-19/cpguidance)



## URGENT PROCEDURES

- Suspend elective procedures, use telemedicine if possible
- Determine elective or urgent procedures on a case-by-case basis.
- **URGENT PROCEDURES:**
  - ITP refills and malfunction
  - Device infection; deep infection -> explant



## SEMI-URGENT PROCEDURES

- Evaluate other cases on individual basis, shared decision making.
- Goal: avoid deterioration of function, reliance on opioids, or emergency room (ER) visits, which increase risk of exposure.

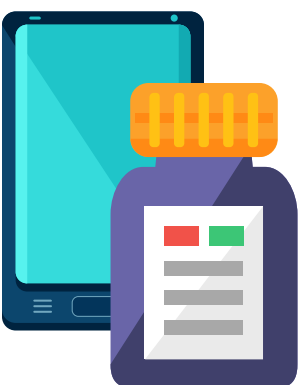
### Procedural scenarios include, but not limited to, the following:

1. Intractable cancer pain
2. Acute herpes zoster or subacute, intractable post-herpetic neuralgia
3. Acute herniated disc and/or worsening lumbar radiculopathy
4. Intractable trigeminal neuralgia
5. Early complex regional pain syndrome
6. Acute cluster headaches and other intractable headache conditions
7. Other intractable, medically resistant pain syndromes



## OPIOIDS

- Use telemedicine to evaluate and continue opioid Rx
- Ensure existing Rx to avoid withdrawal
- Provide nalaxone education and Rx for high-risk patients
- DEA-registered practitioners can issue Rx for pts without in-person evaluation if
  - 1) legitimate medical purpose
  - 2) audio/ visual, real-time, two-way interactive communication system
  - 3) in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.



## STERIODS

- Steroids increase potential for adrenal insufficiency and altered immune response.
- Joints corticosteroid injection shown to be associated with higher risk of influenza.
- Duration of immune suppression could be less with the use of dexamethasone and betamethasone.
- Consider evaluating risks/benefits of steroid injections and use a decreased dose, especially in high-risk patient populations.