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December 23, 2021

Omicron Spread:

As you all know we are in the midst of a sharp increase in COVID infections due to the more contagious Omicron variant. Given the many reliable information sources publicly available today regarding vaccinations, boosters, masks and social distancing measures that help reduce the likelihood of infection and its severity, we are limiting this communication to issues that may not already be widely reported but are relevant to our community.

Monoclonal Antibody Treatment:

Our doctor's network indicates some monoclonal antibodies very effective against previous variants may not be as effective against Omicron. Some NYC hospitals have even stopped giving those monoclonals sighting diminished effectiveness against Omicron. The newer monoclonals believed most effective against Omicron is in very short supply. **Do not rely solely upon the idea that if you get infected you can "just get the monoclonals."** Some may not be available, and others may not be as effective as in the past.

You should still reach out to your doctor or one of our patient advocates about monoclonals as early as possible if you become infected and meet the inclusion criteria. However, please take extra precautions to avoid infection in the first place given the changing monoclonal situation.

Travel:

Travel outside the country brings additional elements of risk. **We recommend you carefully consider the COVID policy of your destination country when deciding if and where to go as they vary. Testing positive in a foreign country subjects you to the local COVID protocols.** It's possible you may not be allowed to leave the country and return home to access US health care. You may be required to quarantine in a "COVID Hotel" managed by governments or to quarantine at a local hospital, family members can be separated from each other.

You may not always have an opportunity to show a negative test to return home. People have left the U.S. negative for COVID but upon arrival at their destination **tested by airport health officials and came up positive.** They are then subject to local COVID protocols. **Check the local COVID protocols of your destination, know what happens if you test positive there, and have a plan.**

We compiled research tools you can use and official government websites to reference the most common destinations at [TheSCA.com/resources/covid/](https://www.thesca.com/resources/covid/) They frequently change and may even change while you are away, so check often, cross-reference and confirm with your travel agent.

In cooperation with our medical community and health professionals, we are monitoring the situation in our community closely, and will issue updates as the situation requires.



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