**McGill University**

**Participant Information Letter**

**COVID-19 and In-Person Research Respecting 2-metre Distancing**

**(Study Title and REB#)**

The health and safety of both research participants and researchers are primary concerns of the University. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information about COVID-19 and how your study participation may be affected because of COVID-19 related risk. All other information in the study consent remains the same.

Please read the following information to determine if participation is right for you at this time.

The occupational health and safety measures that will be put in place during your study participation have been approved by the McGill Emergency Operations Committee, based on current federal and provincial public health directives as well as recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO).

**What are the risks of COVID-19?** For most people, COVID-19 causes 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, and, more rarely, may cause death.

**Who is most at risk?** Persons aged 70 and over, those with a weak immune system and those with a chronic disease such as some cancers, diabetes or heart, lung and kidney disease, are most at risk of developing serious complications if they contract the virus. As per the [Directive: Resumption of research with human participants](https://www.mcgill.ca/coronavirus/resources/directives-resumption-research-human-participants), in-person research involving these vulnerable populations is not allowed at this time in the absence of a strong clinical imperative.

**Can COVID-19 be prevented?** Current evidence suggests person-to-person spread of COVID-19 is efficient when there is close contact, making physical distancing an important prevention measure.  Proper handwashing, cough hygiene and cleaning with an appropriate disinfectant are also key to limiting virus transmission.

It is important to understand that since study participation may include increased travel outside of your home and increased contact with others within a clinical care environment or research site, it may increase your exposure to COVID-19.

**What procedures will be in place to minimize risk of transmission of COVID-19 during your study participation?**

The assessments of risks and the protocols to mitigate them are guided by the [Directive: Preventing the spread of COVID-19 on campus](https://mcgill.ca/coronavirus/resources/directives-preventing-spread-covid-19-campus) and the [Directive: Principles and procedures for research on campus](https://mcgill.ca/coronavirus/resources/directives-principles-and-procedures-research-campus). Measures that will be taken to reduce the risk include:

* maintaining 2-metre physical distancing;
* hand washing before and after study participation;
* providing the participant with a disposable facemask if they do not have one;
* limiting the number of times a participant has to come to a research site;
* reducing the time participants are in contact with other people;
* ensuring all high-touch surfaces and objects are disinfected daily and disinfected between users.

All research team members are required to have training on preventing the spread of infection and all McGill students and employees must respond each day to a required self-assessment health questionnaire. All participants will be screened before accessing the research site and will be asked if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or have been in close contact with anyone who has or has had COVID-19. Participation will be cancelled or postponed when responding yes to any of the screening questions. Wearing a mask that covers the mouth and nose is mandatory inside all McGill buildings, in accordance with Quebec public health regulations.

By agreeing to participate in this study you acknowledge that you have been informed of the health and safety procedures in place and agree to follow them. Please be reminded that participation is voluntary and you may decline or postpone participation at any time.

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There are two ways to acknowledge receipt of this Participant Information Letter. The first and preferred way is digital confirmation (typically email) in advance of the research taking place. The second, acceptable approach is researcher documentation of verbal agreement.