



Coronavirus, COVID-19 and kidney patients: what you need to know

Coronavirus and kidney disease

Headlines and news reports are full of stories about the spread of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. While much is being learned about the virus every day, much is still not known and public health officials all around the world are sharing information and working together to limit the virus' spread as much as possible.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) updates its Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) page regularly. It's a reliable source of the most recent factual information and you can check regularly for the latest updates.

While the chances of encountering someone infected with the coronavirus are extremely small, it's good to remember that each of us can take steps to keep ourselves, and our communities, safer. Here's what the CDC recommends:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer. (Sing "Happy Birthday" to yourself twice while washing your hands—that will ensure you've washed them long enough.)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from anyone who has respiratory symptoms such as a cough or sneezing.
- Stay home if you feel sick or have cold-like or flu-like symptoms including a fever, cough, sore throat, headache or body aches.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw used tissues into the trash.
- Clean and disinfect any objects and surfaces that you touch frequently.

Special precautions for dialysis centers

If you are a dialysis patient, your underlying health condition(s) can put you at a higher risk of becoming seriously ill from COVID-19. The CDC and the American Society of Nephrology have provided guidance to dialysis centers to help them identify and handle suspected cases and to minimize exposure to other patients.

Here are some questions you can ask the staff at your center if you are concerned:

- Can I wait in my car instead of in the waiting room?
- What should I do if I have any flu-like symptoms?
- Can you provide a mask for me to wear during my treatment?
- What procedures do you have in place if you suspect a patient at the center may have COVID-19?
- How will you inform patients of any emergency information?
- Where will I receive dialysis if I get sick?

To prepare for any unforeseen situation, we always recommend having enough food on hand to follow the KCER 3-Day Emergency Diet Plan for dialysis patients. Details of the Emergency Diet may be found here: <https://www.kcercoalition.com/en/resources/patient-resources/during-an-emergency/3-day-emergency-kidney-diet2/>.

Special considerations for transplant recipients

Because transplant recipients take immunosuppressive drugs, they are at higher risk of infection from viruses such as cold or flu. To limit the possibility of being exposed to the coronavirus that causes COVID-19, transplant patients should follow the CDC's tips to avoid catching or spreading germs, and contact their health care provider if they develop cold or flu-like symptoms.

By being informed and taking your own personal precautions, you can help reduce your risk of coming in contact with the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

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Additional information can be found at <https://www.kidneyfund.org/kidney-today/coronavirus-and-kidney-patients.html>.