



Kidney Disease and Coronavirus (COVID-19) What You Need to Know

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Stay informed with information from trusted sources like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP).

FOR EVERYONE IMPACTED BY KIDNEY DISEASES, INCLUDING FAMILY MEMBERS AND CAREGIVERS OF KIDNEY PATIENTS:

- Make sure you have access to several weeks of medications and supplies.
- Keep important phone numbers like your nephrologist (kidney doctor), dialysis facility, transplant center, other medical and care providers on hand and easily accessible.
- Avoid crowds and limit close contact with people.
- Stay away from people who are or appear sick.
- **Contact your healthcare team and avoid others if you are sick or have symptoms of COVID-19** such as a fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, muscle aches, fatigue, headache, and/or diarrhea.
- Wash your hands thoroughly and often, for at least 20 seconds, with soap and water. (Tip! Sing [Happy Birthday twice!](#))
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and dispose of the tissue in a trash can and wash your hands. DO NOT cough or sneeze into your hands. If a tissue is not readily available, cough/sneeze into your elbow.
- Avoid touching your face, especially your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect items and surfaces you touch often like doorknobs, light switches, faucets, TV remotes, and cell phones.
- Avoid handshaking ([learn the Fist bump!](#)) and avoid touching surfaces in public places like elevator buttons, door handles, and handrails.
- Avoid non-essential travel.
- Practice social distancing, but don't live in isolation! Keep in touch with your family and loved ones through phone, web chat, email and social media.
- Reschedule any non-emergency, non-urgent appointments.
- **Seek emergency help** when you have difficulty breathing, persistent pain or pressure in your chest, new confusion, or have bluish lips, face, toes, or fingertips.

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DIALYSIS PATIENTS (in-center and home therapies):

- **DO NOT MISS** or postpone any dialysis treatments. Contact your dialysis unit if you have any questions or concerns.
- Inform your dialysis unit **immediately** if you are not feeling well and have any symptoms such as a fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, muscle aches, fatigue, headache, and/or diarrhea.
- **Your dialysis center should be implementing specific protocols to protect you:**
 - CDC protocol for dialysis facilities can be found [here](#) and includes:
 - Screening patients for fever or breathing/respiratory symptoms before entering;
 - Ensuring proper use of personal protection equipment (PPE) including face masks, gloves, respirators, etc.;
 - Ensuring proper hand hygiene;
 - Separating those who are sick from others; and
 - Staff should not be reporting to work if they are ill.
 - **If you feel your dialysis center is not taking appropriate steps to protect you or other patients, speak up. If your center is not responding to your concerns, contact your local ESRD Network <https://esrdnetworks.org/membership/esrd-networks>.**
- You may notice a change in your treatment time or day, a change in your care, or a change in the PPE that staff wear. You may also be asked to wear a facemask during your entire treatment time. If this concerns you or you have questions as to why, speak up! Your healthcare team is there to help you through this difficult time and keep you as safe and as comfortable as possible.
- If you typically use a transportation service to get to your dialysis facility, confirm with them at least 24 hours prior to your scheduled pick-up that they are still providing transportation. Many businesses have been affected and it's important to make alternate arrangements if needed as soon as possible. If your normal method of transportation is canceled, contact your dialysis facility immediately.
- **If you are on a home dialysis therapy (home hemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis)**, ensure you have enough supplies for the coming weeks. If you are experiencing any disruptions in receiving supplies, **contact your dialysis supplier and/or the dialysis unit that oversees your care.**
- **If you are on the transplant waitlist**, communicate with the transplant coordinator at your transplant center about any updates to transplant surgeries.



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KIDNEY TRANSPLANT RECIPIENTS

- If you are feeling sick, **call your nephrologist and/or transplant center** to let them know your symptoms. Ask what you should do to keep safe or if you need to come in for an appointment. Many individuals are being asked questions over the phone regarding their symptoms to determine if they need to be seen; be prepared to answer questions before going in for an appointment.
- Keep up with your scheduled medical appointments unless your healthcare team suggests rescheduling.
- Have an emergency supply of your medications on hand.
- Have a family and/or friend on standby to help secure any necessary food/household supplies if necessary and it's determined you should not go in public due to your suppressed immune system.

INDIVIDUALS WITH EARLY STAGES OF KIDNEY DISEASE (CKD 1-4, not on dialysis, not transplanted)

- If you are feeling sick, **call your nephrologist and primary care doctor** to let them know your symptoms. Ask what you should do to keep safe.

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