

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)



Guidance for people living with **HEART DISEASE**

For more info. on coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)
Call: 16000, or visit: www.moph.gov.qa



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Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for the people of Qatar living with Coronary Artery Disease (CAD), also known as coronary heart disease (CHD) or ischemic heart disease (IHD), or cardiovascular disease that affects their heart and blood vessels.

What is Coronavirus disease (Covid-19)?

COVID-19 is a highly contagious disease with symptoms including fever, cough and shortness of breath.

How do people get infected?

Coronavirus is transmitted, like any other viruses that attacks the respiratory system, from one infected person to another in the droplets when they sneeze, cough or speak especially if at a distance of less than one or two meters. It can also be transmitted through close contact with the infected person or touching surfaces.

Are people living with heart disease at higher risk?

People who have heart disease or hypertension are more likely to be infected and to develop more severe symptoms from coronavirus. Also those who have survived a stroke and might be more immunocompromised (having a weakened immune system that is more at risk from infection) need to be more careful to reduce the risk of infection.

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, occurs when the force of blood against the artery walls is too high. Over time, high blood pressure can lead to a heart attack, stroke and other serious conditions and therefore patients with high blood pressure need to take extra care to keep manage this.

How can people living with heart disease strengthen their immune system?

- Don't smoke
- Remain hydrated
- Have a balanced diet, high in fruits and vegetables (or as indicated by your healthcare professionals) & eat less processed meat, less red meat, and fewer sweets
- Although there is not yet a vaccine for coronavirus, people with heart conditions should stay up to date on their vaccinations such as those for pneumonia and flu
- Control other health conditions, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes;
- Get adequate sleep
- Maintain regular exercise even if you are staying at home and maintain a healthy weight, as advised by your healthcare provider
- Avoid unnecessary stress, stress can weaken the immune system weight, as advised by your healthcare provider
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What protective measures should people living with heart disease take?

- Follow the instructions of MoPH by practicing physical distancing, staying home, avoiding crowds, parks and refraining from touching one another or surfaces
- Take steps to avoid infection, such as washing your hands frequently and cooking meats thoroughly
- Always use a face mask and protective gloves when visiting public areas (i.e. grocery shopping or attending an appointment), at work and even at home when there is a family gathering
- Personal hygiene is extremely important for heart patients at this time of the virus outbreak. Wash your hands with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcoholic-based solution (60%) or a sanitizer
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth (or ensure you wash your hands before and after);
- Clean surfaces touched often like doorknobs, handles, steering wheels, or light switches with a disinfectant to remove the virus
- Monitoring your blood pressure at home can be useful for patients, especially for those whose blood pressure varies a great deal
- Ensure you take your medications as prescribed by your doctor
- Prepare a list of your medications and the dosages
- Get adequate refills for medications, sufficient for at least two weeks
- Have the contact information of your health care provider at hand so that you do not need to leave the house, if you become ill

What should people living with heart disease do, if they get the virus?

- If you are showing symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, fever or shortness of breath you may need assessment by healthcare professional. Start self-quarantine, avoid any contact with others and call the national **COVID-19 hotline on 16000**;
- Practice the "Sick day rules" for people with heart disease:
 - Check your blood pressure more often
 - Reduce sodium (salt) and fat (that leads to higher cholesterol) in your diet
 - Do not stop your heart medication
 - If you live alone and have to go out, only do so with a family member or a friend
- Monitor temperature, when needed use acetaminophen (paracetamol/ Panadol) rather than anti-inflammatory (ibuprofen/ Advil);
- Always follow healthcare professional team recommendations.

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