

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)



Guidance for **KIDNEY PATIENTS**

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 with kidney disease or who have undergone a kidney transplant.

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 patients with kidney disease and who have had a kidney transplant at higher risk?

It is thought that you are at increased risk of severe illness if you contract the virus and it is very important that you are particularly stringent in following the physical distancing measures.

For early stage kidney patients or transplant recipients, contact your healthcare professional or nephrologist with any questions or concerns.

What should you do if you are on dialysis?

If you are on dialysis, you should NOT miss your treatments. Your dialysis unit will work with you to ensure you get your treatment.

What about my monitoring and blood tests?

The important thing is to keep safe, so you will still have necessary blood tests, medications and treatments.

How can people with kidney 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) and eat less processed meat, less red meat, and fewer sweets
- Although there is not yet a vaccine for coronavirus, people with kidney disease 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 indicated your healthcare professional
- Avoid unnecessary stress, stress can weaken the immune system

What protective measures should kidney patients and transplant recipients 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, avoid touching your face 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 kidney disease and transplant patients at this time of the virus outbreak. Wash your hands with soap and water. If soap and 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
- 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 about children with kidney disease?

The general advice on prevention of transmission, hygiene and social-distancing measures are completely the same between adults and children.

Children identified at higher risk include:

- All children on dialysis
- Children with CKD stage 5, awaiting dialysis or awaiting a transplant
- Children with CKD stage 4, especially those children who have other co-morbidities (other health problems in other organs, such as heart, lungs, liver, and neurology)
- Children with CKD stage 3, if they have other co morbidities (other health problems in other organs, such as heart, lungs, liver, and neurology)

All of these groups should practice strict social distancing. Like adults, if a child is unwell or has a fever this should be discussed with their treating kidney team since self-isolation without notifying your team can present additional risks. These risks include invasive bacterial infections, bacterial peritonitis and haemodialysis line infections that often present with fever alone. Any report of fever should be discussed with your renal team.

- Children with a kidney or other organ transplant, and
- Children taking immunosuppression for other auto-immune or inflammatory kidney conditions

This group of patients are recommended to practice strict self-isolation for a period of 12 weeks throughout the height of the pandemic. Specific instructions have been developed covering immunosuppression type, strength, frequency and length of treatment as well as the severity of the underlying disorder. Ask your doctor for more details.

What should people with kidney disease or transplant 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 kidney disease:
 - o Keep hydrated and drink plenty of water
 - o Reduce sodium (salt) and fat (that leads to higher cholesterol) in your diet
 - o Do not stop your kidney medication unless directed by your doctor;
 - o Rest and postpone exercise
- Monitor temperature, when needed use acetaminophen (paracetamol/ Panadol) rather than anti-inflammatory (ibuprofen/ Advil);
- Always follow healthcare professional team recommendations.

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