CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

Guidance for
PEOPLE WITH ASTHMA

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

State of Qatar
MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH

مؤسسة حمد الطبية
Hamad Medical Corporation
HEALTH · EDUCATION · RESEARCH   صحة · تعليم · بحوث

مؤسسة الرعاية الصحية الأولية
PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CORPORATION

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for the people of Qatar who have asthma.

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 attack 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 two meters. It can also be transmitted through close contact with the infected person or touching surfaces.

Are asthmatics at higher risk?

People with asthma may be at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, because the illness can affect the respiratory tract (i.e. the nose, throat, and lungs) and cause an asthma attack. COVID-19 may also lead to pneumonia and acute respiratory disease, which can be more serious in people with asthma.

Conditions that increase oxygen needs or reduce the ability of the body to use it properly will put patients at higher risk of serious lung conditions such as pneumonia.

As there is currently no specific treatment or vaccine to prevent COVID-19, the best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

What protective measures should people living with asthma take?

- Follow the instructions of MoPH by practicing physical distancing, staying home, avoiding crowds, parks and refraining from touching one another or surfaces

- Personal hygiene is extremely important at this time of the virus outbreak. Wash your hands regularly with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based solution (60%) or a sanitizer

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth (or ensure you wash your hands before and after)

- Take your asthma medication exactly as prescribed

- Know how to use your inhaler

- Talk to your healthcare provider, insurer, and pharmacist about creating an emergency supply of prescription medications, such as asthma inhalers. Make sure that you have 30 days of non-prescription medications and supplies on hand too in case you need to stay home for a long time.

- Avoid your asthma triggers (different people will react to different triggers that cause their asthma attack);
  - Common triggers include smoke (whether from personal smoking, second hand smoke or wood-burning or incense-burning), dust mites and cockroach allergen, outdoor air pollution, furry pets, mold but also viral infections that affect the respiratory system;
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces like tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks daily to protect yourself against COVID-19. Avoid disinfectants that can cause an asthma attack;
- As more cases of COVID-19 are discovered, it is natural for some people to feel concerned or stressed. Strong emotions can trigger an asthma attack. Take steps to help yourself cope with stress and anxiety.

What should people with asthma 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 asthma:

- Check your blood pressure more often
- Reduce sodium (salt) and fat (that leads to higher cholesterol) in your diet
- Do not stop your medication unless directed by your doctor;
- Rest and postpone exercise
- Monitor temperature, when needed use acetaminophen (Paracetamol/ Panadol) rather than anti-inflammatory (Ibuprofen/ Advil);
- Always follow healthcare professional team recommendations.

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