

This text has been adapted from the ERA-EDTA Working Group EUDIAL for patients on dialysis

Source: <https://tinyurl.com/ERAEDTA>

Coronavirus is spread mainly from person to person. Older adults and people on dialysis or other severe chronic medical conditions seem to be at higher risk for more serious Coronavirus illness. Because of this increased risk for kidney patients, it is especially important for you to take actions to reduce your risk of exposure.

It's important that everyone follow these preventative measures:

- **Stay home** on your non-dialysis days, avoid public transportation, abstain from travelling around the country, avoid personal contact and to abstain from public, private, or religious events (family reunions, marriages, funerals, etc.). You may want to abstain from personal contact especially with your children and grandchildren because the younger population can spread the disease often without showing symptoms.
- **Stay home** if you feel sick or have any symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills. If you are a dialysis patient inform your dialysis centre that you are not well.
- **Avoid others who are sick.** Limiting face-to-face contact with others as much as possible.
- **Cover coughs and sneezes** with a tissue, then throw it in the trash can. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- **Wash hands often** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (Sing "Happy Birthday" to yourself twice while washing your hands—that will ensure you've washed them long enough.); especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If you don't have soap and water, use hand sanitizer with 60%-95% alcohol.
- **Clean** very often the things that get touched a lot, like door handles.
- **Avoid touching your face**, especially your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- **Wear a facemask** if your healthcare team or someone from the public health office says you should.
- **Avoid** greetings people with a handshake, hug or a kiss. A smile and a verbal greeting will be just fine.

If you are at higher risk of getting very sick from Coronavirus such as being on hemodialysis, you should:

- Stock up on supplies, including medication.
- Take everyday precautions (see below) to keep space between yourself and others.
- When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact.
- Wash your hands often.
- Avoid public transportation.
- Avoid crowds as much as possible.
- During a Coronavirus outbreak in your area, stay home as much as possible.

Why do you need to prepare for the coronavirus outbreak?

If there is a virus outbreak in your area and you need to decrease your risk of getting sick, it's important that you have shelf stable food in your home. Shelf stable means foods that last a long time without spoiling, such as canned foods. It's important to prepare now by stocking up 2-3 weeks' worth of healthy, kidney friendly foods, fresh water, and medicines. This will help reduce your risk of infection by allowing you to avoid crowded spaces like grocery stores and drug stores.

What about your dialysis treatments and/or medical appointments?

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you are on dialysis, you should NOT miss your treatments. Contact your clinic if you feel sick, had contact with a proven COVID-19 positive subject or have any other concerns, so that the dialysis centre can choose whether you should be tested first for the coronavirus and that the dialysis centre can be prepared for your arrival. Furthermore, you should inform staff of fever or respiratory symptoms immediately upon arrival at the dialysis centre.

General hygienic measures you can take yourself as hemodialysis patient:

- (1) In patients' waiting rooms, use alcohol dispensers.
- (2) When you are a hemodialysis patient, please wash your hands and fistula arm before starting dialysis and thoroughly disinfect the puncture areas.

Please remember that there is no need or benefit to wear masks of any kind to move around the hospital wards, corridors, or avenues of the hospital. Inappropriate use of these devices is a waste of resources which, in case of real and justified necessity, could cause an important deficiency.

For HD patients that had contact with people who have a high chance of being infected, or with people who subsequently tested positive:

When you have had contact with people who have a high chance of being infected, or with people who subsequently tested positive, please contact your dialysis facility immediately. Staff of your dialysis facility may ask you to follow some rules. These may encompass among others:

(1) In case of absence of manifestations of disease: wear a surgical mask when arriving at the center until leaving, and during the entire duration of the dialysis session. When sneezing, use disposable handkerchiefs and throw them away after each single use. Rigorous application of disinfectants is also recommended.

(2) In case you have to go to dialysis, but have fever or infectious airways, you will probably be sent to the emergency unit or a special COVID-19 unit, where you will be assessed by emergency staff and infectious disease specialists.

If you are a home hemodialysis patient or a peritoneal dialysis patient, you should be assisted at home as far as is possible, using telereporting assistance or other electronic systems for clinical management and to supplement home visits by healthcare staff, as deemed necessary.