



Kidney Chat: Ask a Nephrologist about COVID-19

April 14, 2020

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Disclaimer

- COVID-19 is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation. The latest information may have changed since this webinar's initial recording.

Objectives

This webinar will address:

- ☑ COVID-19 and kidney disease
- ☑ How you can protect yourself and others
- ☑ Guidance for dialysis and transplant patients

CORONAVIRUS RESOURCES

AKF is offering important program updates and resources for kidney patients to help you and your family stay healthy during this time.

Visit [KidneyFund.org/coronavirus](https://www.KidneyFund.org/coronavirus)



CORONAVIRUS

Emergency Fund



- Provides \$250 one-time grants to patients for food, transportation and medications.
- Patients are encouraged to apply; AKF will approve applications in the order received as new funding becomes available.
- If you are able, please consider making a gift today at [KidneyFund.org](https://www.KidneyFund.org).

Thanks to our speaker

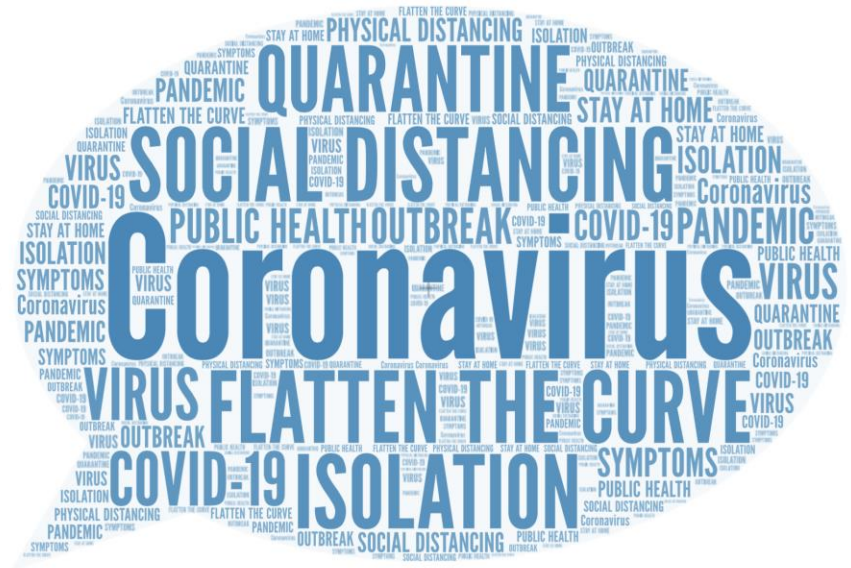


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- 2020 awardee of American Kidney Fund Clinical Scientist in Nephrology Program
- Currently pursuing Master of Public Health degree from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

Question and Answer Session

Question



What do all these buzzwords really mean?

Q: What do all these buzzwords really mean?

CORONAVIRUS

VS

COVID-19



- Name of virus that causes COVID-19
- Scientific name of the virus is “severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2” or SARS-CoV-2

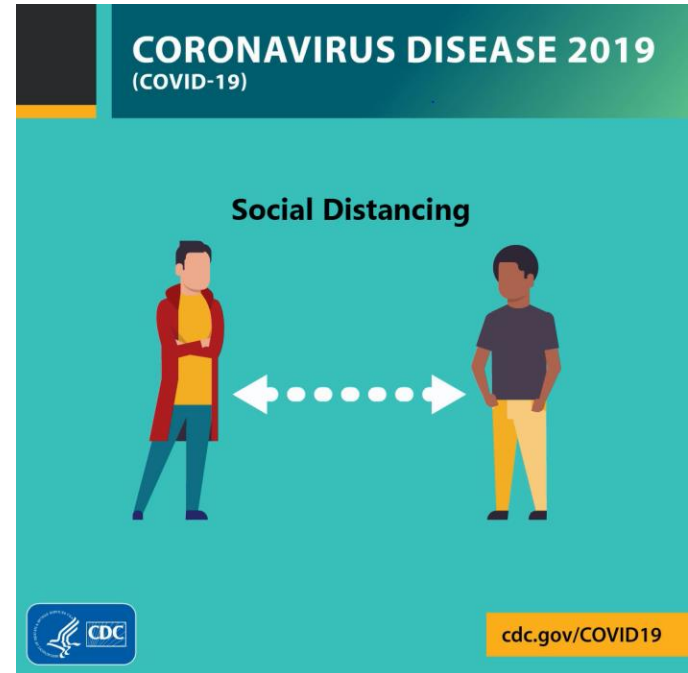


- Name of the disease
- Short for “coronavirus disease 2019”
- Respiratory illness with flu-like symptoms

Q: What do all these buzzwords really mean?

Social distancing/ Physical distancing

- Increasing the physical space between you and other people outside your home to stop the spread of disease
- Ways to practice social distancing:
 - Avoid social gatherings
 - Avoid crowded places
 - Keep 6 ft distance from others in public
 - Work from home
 - Use delivery services



Q: What do all these buzzwords really mean?

Quarantine

- Keeps someone who might have been exposed to the virus and is at risk for COVID-19 away from others
- Involves staying at home for 14 days with self-monitoring (include checking temperatures 2x/day)
- For example: recent return from travel from a place with rapid spread of COVID-19

Isolation

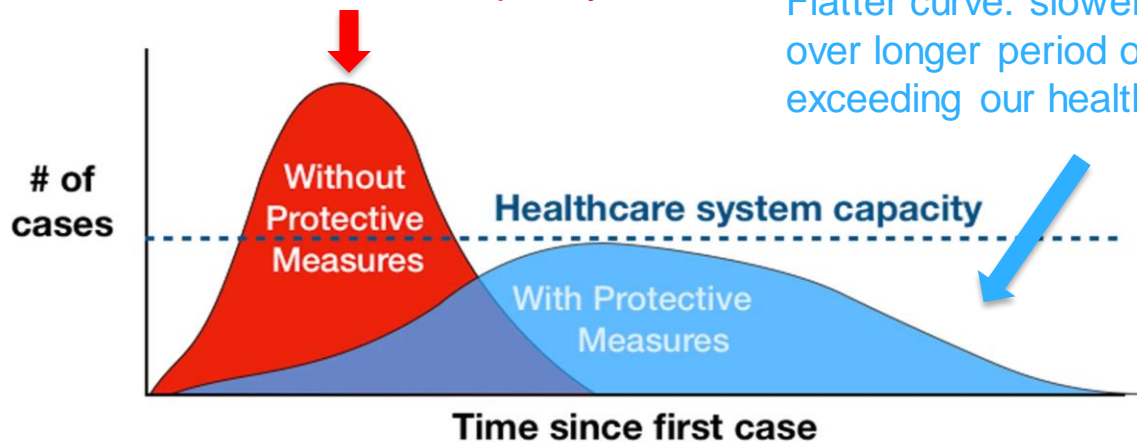
- Keeps sick people with a contagious illness away from those who are not sick
- For example: a sick person at home confined or isolated in a “sick” bedroom or space

Q: What do all these buzzwords really mean?

Flatten the curve

Steep curve: virus spreading fast.
Peak total number of cases
exceeds healthcare capacity

Flatter curve: slower spread of virus
over longer period of time; prevents
exceeding our healthcare capacity



Adapted from CDC / The Economist

Source: from The New York Times

COVID-19 and Kidney Disease

Question

I was recently diagnosed with stage 4 chronic kidney disease. Am I high-risk for COVID-19?

Q: Am I high-risk for COVID-19?

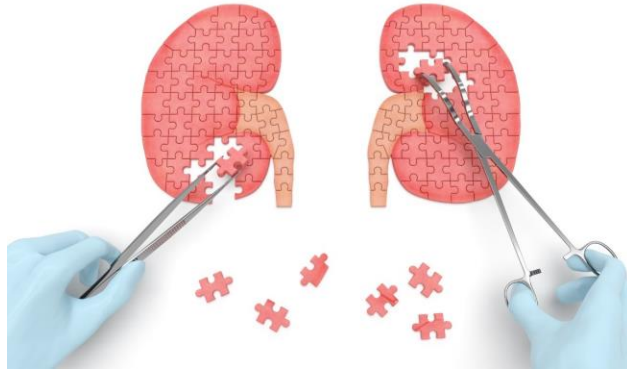
- COVID-19 is extremely contagious regardless of who you are.
- People at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 include:
 - Age > 65
 - Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
 - People with **chronic kidney disease (any stage) or on dialysis**
 - People with **other chronic illnesses** affecting lungs/heart/liver, diabetes, high blood pressure, severe obesity, conditions that can affect the immune system
 - People **taking immunosuppressants**
- Talk to your nephrologist or primary care provider (PCP) about your concerns. Your overall risk depends on your situation and current medical issues.

Question

Why are kidney patients at higher risk?

Q: Why are kidney patients at higher risk?

- No specific studies to pinpoint the reason
- However, kidney patients are usually older and have other chronic conditions, which are both known risk factors.



Question

What do nephrologists know about how coronavirus impacts kidney function?

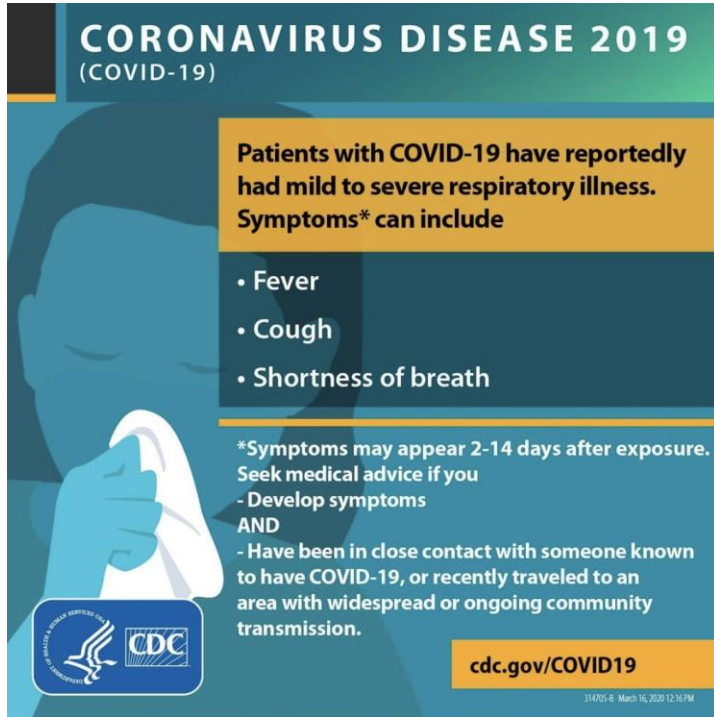
Q: What do nephrologists know about how coronavirus impacts kidney function?

- Some patients with severe cases of COVID-19 develop acute kidney injury.
- Some of the COVID-19 patients who develop kidney injury need dialysis.
- Contributors to kidney injury include:
 - Low blood flow to the kidneys; severe illness lowers blood pressure.
 - Intense systemic inflammation in some severe cases
 - Muscle breakdown (rare)
 - Suggestions of virus attacking the kidney (currently being studied)
- Not all severe COVID-19 cases develop kidney injury.

Question

Are there any other symptoms besides cough and fever I should look out for?

Q: Are there any other symptoms besides cough and fever I should look out for?



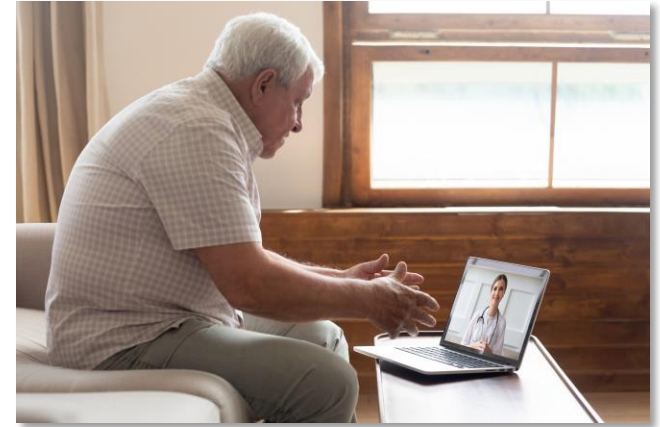
- Sore throat
- Nasal congestion
- Unexplainable feeling of discomfort or illness
- Headache
- Body aches
- Loss of sense of smell/taste
- Some dialysis patients have reported less common symptoms: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, low-grade fevers
- Unsure about your symptoms? Use the [CDC Self-Checker tool](https://www.cdc.gov/covid19/self-checker).

Question

Should CKD patients do anything differently than other patients if they think they have COVID-19?

Q: Should kidney patients do anything differently than other patients if they think they have COVID-19?

- Contact your doctor as soon as you start having symptoms to find out if you need to seek medical attention.
- Your doctor may tell you that you are well enough to stay home and manage your care.
- Your doctor will determine whether you need to change any medicines you are on while you are sick at home.



Tips for taking care of yourself at home

- Stay in touch with your PCP and nephrologist.
- Call your doctor if your symptoms get worse. Emergency symptoms: trouble breathing, chest pain, unable to eat and drink, confusion, bluish lips/face
- Limit the spread of germs to others.
 - Avoid sharing personal items.
 - Avoid touching your face.
 - Clean and disinfect surfaces you frequently touch.
 - Avoid unnecessary visitors.
 - Handle soiled laundry with gloves.

 **World Health Organization**

Home care for people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19
Take care of yourself and your family

For ill people

If you are ill with fever and cough



Clean hands frequently with soap and water or with alcohol-based hand rub.



Stay at home; do not attend work, school or public places. Rest, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food.



Stay in a separate room from other family members, but if not possible wear a medical mask and keep a distance of at least 1 meter (3 feet) from other people. Keep the room well-ventilated and if possible use a dedicated bathroom.



When coughing or sneezing, cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or use disposable tissue and discard after use. If you experience difficulty breathing, call your health care facility immediately.

Tips to protect others outside the home if you are sick



- Wear a mask if you have to leave the house.
- Avoid public transportation if you can.
- If you have a medical appointment, notify the clinic that you have or may have COVID-19 so that they can prepare for your arrival.

Protecting Yourself and Others

Question

Do I really need to stay indoors all day if I am not sick? What advice should I follow about staying home if I am high-risk?

Q: What advice should I follow about staying home if I am high-risk?

- **STAY HOME** unless for essential reasons (continue going to dialysis!)
- Ask for help with errands.
- It is OK to go outside for fresh air and spend time with others who live in your home who are not sick.
- Just in case...
 - Keep a 2-week supply of essential items.
 - [Complete a care plan](#) as part of emergency preparedness.
 - Know your asthma action plan if you have asthma.



Question

How do we stay safe and prevent ourselves from getting sick when we have to leave the house?

Q: How do we stay safe and prevent ourselves from getting sick when we have to leave the house?

- Understand how SARS-CoV-2 spreads
 - Person-to-person
 - Main way: respiratory droplets (when you sneeze, cough, talk)
 - Other ways: contaminated surfaces, people with COVID-19 who do not show any symptoms

Q: How do we stay safe and prevent ourselves from getting sick when we have to leave the house?

- Avoid crowds (time your grocery visits).
- Keep a 6-ft distance between you and others.
- Clean your hands regularly (soap and water or at least 60% alcohol).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth, hands, and face.
- Clean and disinfect items you bring inside the house.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a cloth mask (CDC)



Special Considerations for Dialysis and Transplant Patients

Question

Do you have any tips for people on peritoneal dialysis or home hemodialysis?

Q: Do you have any tips for people on peritoneal dialysis or home hemodialysis?

- Make sure you **have AT LEAST a 2-week supply of home dialysis supplies** in case there is an issue with the supply chain or you have to self-isolate or quarantine at home.
- Contact your dialysis unit if you or someone in your home gets sick or has been exposed.

Question

What are dialysis centers doing to protect high-risk dialysis patients?

Q: What are dialysis centers doing to protect high-risk dialysis patients?

- Staff training on hand and respiratory hygiene, cough etiquette, proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Routine cleaning and disinfection of all equipment
- Screening of all patients for signs and symptoms of respiratory infection upon arrival
- Separation of sick patients from other patients
- Maintaining communication with the health department

Question

What special precautions should transplant recipients take?

Q: What special precautions should transplant recipients take?

- Do not change how you **take your immunosuppressants**.
- **Avoid travel** unless it is absolutely necessary. Immediate household contacts of transplant patients should avoid unnecessary travel too.
- Make sure you **have AT LEAST 2-weeks worth of your medicines**. Get 90-day refills if you can. Fill your medications at least 1 week in advance.
- Consider drive-through pharmacy, ordering via mail, or ask someone else to pick up at the pharmacy for you.
- Contact your transplant center if you are having symptoms or if you have been in contact with a COVID-19 patient.

Question

How is this pandemic currently affecting kidney transplants?

Q: How is this pandemic currently affecting kidney transplants?

- Some centers have postponed living donor transplants.
- In some areas, deceased donor transplants are impacted too.
- Call your transplant center or visit [kidneytransplantcenters.org](https://www.kidneytransplantcenters.org) for a list of leading transplant centers and their current status.

Question

Are deceased donors tested for COVID-19?

Q: Are deceased donors tested for COVID-19?

- It is now standard of care to test deceased donors for COVID-19.
- Coordinators at transplant centers who are doing kidney transplants are providing such information to potential patients when an organ offer is made.

Other

Question

Are there any special foods I should be eating to help boost my immunity?

Q: Are there any special foods I should be eating to help boost my immunity?

- There is **no evidence** that any specific foods or food group can prevent or fight off the coronavirus.
- Eat kidney-friendly foods and continue following your recommended food and fluid plan to manage your kidney disease.



Question

Can I still get emergency medical treatment for other reasons during this pandemic?

Q: Can I still get emergency medical treatment for other reasons during this pandemic?

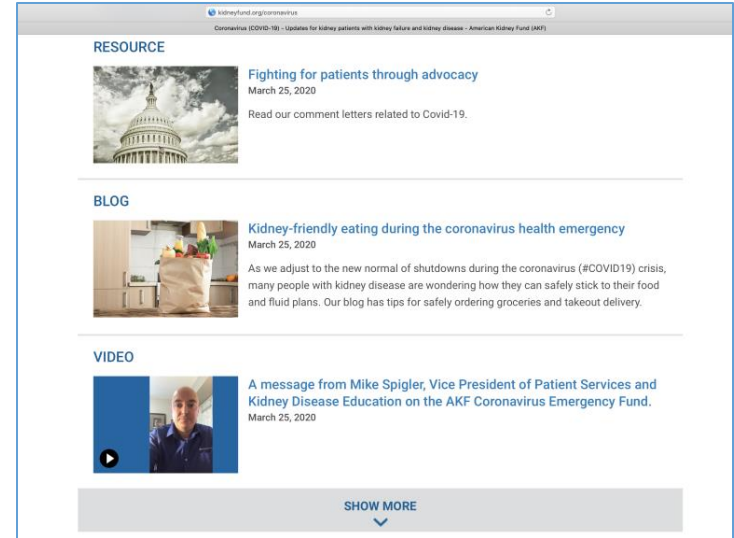
- Yes, you can. While elective procedures have been canceled, hospitals will still see patients who need emergency treatment whether it is a COVID-19 or non-COVID-19 related issue.
- Biggest concern with pandemic is how resources are being used and the availability of healthcare staff especially when it reaches the peak of the curve.

Question

Where can I find more information?

Q: Where can I find more information?

- [KidneyFund.org/coronavirus](https://www.kidneyfund.org/coronavirus) for AKF updates, blog posts, tips, FAQs, and access to other resources for kidney patients and caregivers.
- [CDC.gov/COVID-19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID-19) for the latest updates and guidance from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention



Thank you for watching!