

COVID-19: Consumer evidence summary for kidney or kidney-pancreas transplant recipients



SARS-CoV-2 is the newest member of the coronavirus family which causes the disease COVID-19. Both the virus and the disease were unknown before December 2019. As the pandemic continues there is a large volume of research and guidelines being released in response to new evidence. CARI has produced this COVID-19 consumer evidence summary for people with kidney or kidney-pancreas transplants and their carers. This summary should not replace talking to your Nephrologist or Transplant team.



What is the risk with COVID-19 in kidney or kidney-pancreas transplant recipients?

You may have an increased risk of severe disease from COVID-19 if you have had a kidney or kidney-pancreas transplant, are on stable doses of immunosuppression medication and have one or more other chronic conditions.

Kidney Health Australia: kidney.org.au/about-us/news/coronavirus-covid-19

Kidney Health New Zealand: kidney.health.nz



Do I still need to see my regular doctors and have my usual tests?

It is very important that if you need to see a doctor or allied health professional for non-COVID-19 related issues, that you continue to do so. This includes mental health services and other specialists (diabetes, cardiac, mental health, dental etc). Many of these appointments will be held where possible via telehealth or telephone to minimise close contact with others. It is also important for you to have your regular tests, including blood tests. There is no vaccine for COVID-19 currently, but your doctor may want to make sure all your other vaccinations are up to date - please check with your Nephrologist or Transplant team.



Are there any vaccines or treatments proven to be safe and effective for COVID-19?

Most people who become ill with COVID-19 will be able to recover from home. There are no specific treatments for COVID-19 that have been proven to be effective. However, some of the things that make you feel better when you have the flu, such as, getting enough rest, staying well hydrated and taking medications to relieve fever, aches and pains, can also help with COVID-19.

If you wish to take any new medication or make any changes to your current medications, including herbal remedies, it is strongly recommended that you consult your Nephrologist or Transplant team **BEFORE changing or commencing any new drugs.**

In the meantime, scientists are working hard to develop effective treatments including some drugs used to treat other conditions. However, currently all of these are experimental and there is **NO EVIDENCE** to prove that they are safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus.

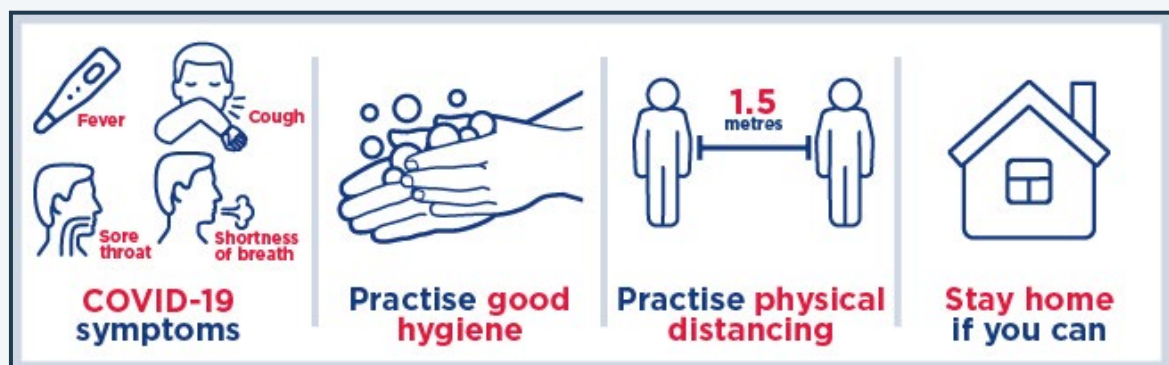


How can YOU reduce the risk of acquiring or spreading COVID-19?

Talk to your Nephrologist or Transplant team about telehealth consultations (this may be via the telephone or computer) and how you can safely return to work or school.

Australian government information: Tel 1800 020 080, health.gov.au

New Zealand government information: Tel 0800 358 5453, covid19.govt.nz





How is 2019 SARS-CoV-2 diagnosed?

Contact your Nephrologist or Transplant team (Australia) or Healthline (New Zealand) about COVID-19 testing if you develop mild symptoms. The testing involves a simple swab of your nose or throat to obtain a sample. The validity of the testing depends on the sampling site, viral load, and testing method. A negative test result does not rule out SARS-CoV-2 infection and should be combined with clinical observation for patient management. Most of the laboratories are currently using nucleic acid tests for COVID-19.



Should I wear a face mask or covering?

Wearing a face mask in the community can be helpful in preventing people who have COVID-19 from spreading it to others. If you have confirmed, suspected or have symptoms of COVID-19, you should wear a mask when in close contact with others or need to leave your home for medical care. Also, if your healthcare provider or government advises you to wear a mask when in public areas, follow that advice. If you need to wear a face mask (a surgical or procedure mask that is flat or pleated; some are shaped like cups), it is important to follow these steps to ensure the mask is effective. **Remember, it is not safe to re-use single use masks.** The use of face coverings made of other materials (e.g. cotton fabric), also known as nonmedical masks, has not been studied well. There is no current evidence to make a recommendation for or against their use.



How to put on, use, take off and dispose of a mask

1



Before putting on a mask, wash hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water

2



Cover mouth and nose with mask and ensure there are no gaps between your face and the mask

Avoid touching the mask while using it; if you do, clean your hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water

3



Replace the mask with a new one as soon as it is damp and do not re-use single use masks

4



To remove the mask: remove it from behind (do not touch the front of mask); discard immediately in a closed bin; wash hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water

[who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks)

Australia



Emergency: 000

Mental health

Lifeline

Tel 13 11 14, lifeline.org.au

Beyond Blue

Tel 1800 512 348, coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au

Government

headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support/covid-19

Kidney health, including Indigenous resources

Transplant Australia

Tel 1800 827 757, transplant.org.au

Kidney Health Australia

Tel 1800 454 363, kidney.org.au

New Zealand



Emergency: 111

Healthline

Free call 0800 611 116, healthpoint.co.nz

Mental health

Government

Call or text 1737, covid19.govt.nz

Depression helpline

Call 0800 111 757 or text 8681, depression.org.nz

Kidney health

Kidney Health New Zealand

Tel 0800 543 639, kidney.health.nz

This consumer evidence summary is based on the best information available at the time of writing. All information included is currently ungraded as there is not enough evidence to provide evidence-based recommendations. Additional information and a review of the recommendation strength will be added as recommendations are updated. The full evidence summary is available at www.cari.org.au.