

April 2020

QUALITY INSIGHTS RENAL NETWORK 3



***KIDNEYS R US***

**NEWSLETTER**

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## **Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)**

### **What is Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

Coronavirus disease 2019 (abbreviated “COVID-19) is a new respiratory virus spreading to the United States. In COVID-19, ‘CO’ stands for ‘corona,’ ‘VI’ for ‘virus,’ and ‘D’ for disease. There are many types of human coronaviruses including some that commonly cause mild upper-respiratory tract illnesses. COVID-19 is a new disease, caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus that has not been seen before in humans.

The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily in the community (“community spread”). Community spread means people have been infected with the virus in an area, including some who are not sure how or where they became infected.

The virus is spreading from person-to-person. Someone who is actively sick with COVID-19 can spread the illness to others. That is why the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that these patients be isolated either in the hospital or at home (depending on how sick they are) until they are better and no longer pose a risk of infecting others.

Current CDC guidance for when it is OK to release someone from isolation is made on a case by case basis and includes meeting all of the following requirements:

- The patient is free from fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- The patient is no longer showing symptoms, including cough.
- The patient has tested negative on at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected at least 24 hours apart.

Someone who has been released from isolation is not considered to pose a risk of infection to others.

## How can I protect myself from getting COVID-19?

Coronaviruses are generally thought to be spread from person-to-person through respiratory droplets.

Currently there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food. **Before preparing or eating food it is important to always wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds for general food safety. Throughout the day wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing, or going to the bathroom.**

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

In general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from food products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient, refrigerated, or frozen temperatures.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. However, as a reminder, CDC always recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.

Dialysis patients may be asked to wear facemasks while at their dialysis facility to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 while receiving care or treatment. This is being done as a precaution as not all people who are infected are showing symptoms when they can be infecting others. It is important that we all follow the recommendation of the healthcare professionals as we work to limit the transmission of this virus.



Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others. The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings (at home or in a health care facility).

**Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.** If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty: Wash every part of your hands, top to bottom, including palms.

### **Are there treatments for COVID-19?**

There is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19. People with COVID-19 should receive supportive care to help relieve symptoms. For severe cases, treatment should include care to support vital organ functions. People who think they may have been exposed to COVID-19 should contact their healthcare provider immediately.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>

The situation is changing daily. It is important that you maintain awareness of the changes in guidance from healthcare professionals. You may need to wear a mask during dialysis. Physicians will determine whether or not you require hospitalization if you show symptoms of the coronavirus.

Travel is not currently recommended. You should stay home unless you need to go out for medical appointments. You should remain 6 feet apart from other people. Non-emergency surgeries are currently on hold in most hospitals and same day surgery centers. Contact your vascular surgeon if you are scheduled for any vascular surgeries in the coming weeks to determine what are the current recommendations.

At the current time, all group meetings are limited to less than 10 people. In response to the unique circumstances resulting from the outbreak of COVID-19, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has provided the following guidance for your facility's patient engagement activities:



**Until further notice it is recommended that patient engagement and advocacy activities such as peer mentoring, hosting Lobby Days, attending support groups, and participating in QAPI meetings be done so virtually, over the telephone, online or thru another distant, non-person to person format to limit patient exposure risk.**

Speak with your social worker to find out if your normal group will be conducted via telephone. Many may be cancelling until such time as it is OK to meet in person again.

It is important to maintain some exercise and good eating habits. While we are all limited with where we can go outside of our homes, it is important to move around inside and eat healthy meals. Speak to your dietitian if you have any questions about the food you are eating. Medications should continue to be taken as prescribed by your physicians. This current global public health crisis is affecting us all. We need to remember that when we get frustrated with the restrictions, our natural response may be to strike out verbally at those around us, family and dialysis staff. We need to be mindful of how we interact and how we speak to each other. We will get through this together.

A graphic featuring several blue 3D blocks spelling out 'SEARCH' in a perspective view. To the right, the text 'COMPARE. FIND.' is written in large blue letters. Below this, it says 'Visit Dialysis Facility Compare to choose the right dialysis care for you.' In the bottom right corner, the Medicare.gov logo is displayed in green and white.

**SEARCH**

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Visit **Dialysis Facility Compare** to choose the right dialysis care for you.

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.gov

To File a Grievance Regarding your Dialysis Care please contact:

**QIRN3**

**Cranbury Gates Office Park**

**109 South Main Street, Suite 21**

**Cranbury, NJ 08512**

**Phone: 888-877-8400 (toll-free)**

**Fax: 609-490-0835**

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**[www.qirn3.org](http://www.qirn3.org)**

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## **JOIN THE PAC**

The Patient Advisory Committee (PAC) for QIRN3 consists of dialysis patients, transplant patients and family members of those patients. The committee meets once every two months to discuss issues relevant to ESRD patients. The PAC members have a genuine concern for quality of care issues and encourage patients to be involved in their healthcare. They are willing to share skills and experience with others. Each facility is encouraged to have a PAC representative. Talk to your social worker to volunteer!

Call toll free 1-888-877-8400 to join the PAC.