NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND THE CORONA VIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)

Q & A

If I have a **chronic health condition**, what do I need to know about COVID-19?

Q **If I have a chronic health condition, am I more likely to get COVID-19?**

A People of all ages can get the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

But people living with chronic conditions, especially if older (60 years and above), are at higher risk of becoming severely ill with COVID-19 symptoms, particularly if these pre-existing conditions are not well monitored and controlled.

If you are older than 60 years of age or have a chronic health condition such as lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, kidney failure, or weakened immunity conditions, there is a risk that COVID-19 can make you severely ill.

Q **If I have a chronic condition, what should I do to avoid getting COVID-19?**

Wash your hands frequently, avoid touching your face.

Regularly clean and disinfect objects and surfaces.

Stay away from anyone who appears to be sick.

Ask family and friends who are sick to avoid visiting you.

Always stay at a safe distance, at least 1.5 metres apart from any other person.

Avoid going to places with large crowds (stores, supermarkets, etc.). It is better to ask friends or relatives for help in purchasing the necessary items.

Wear a medical face mask for protection if you must leave home or be in crowded areas.

How can I be well prepared during this pandemic?

Planning for essentials like food, water and medications is critical.

Maintain a healthy and balanced diet.

Ensure that you have an adequate supply of all your chronic medications, such as keeping a supply for 2 to 3 months.

Have cleaning supplies in your home (soap, disinfectants, hand sanitizer).

Be physically active every day. Even 15-30 minutes of walking every day is beneficial.

Have your doctor's phone number handy, somewhere you and your family members can find it easily. This is in addition to other phone numbers that may be helpful (such as the pharmacy, primary health care centre, Red Cross…).

3

Q What should I do if I feel ill?

Call your doctor right away. Feeling ill might be due to many reasons other than the coronavirus.

Most hospitals and clinics have set up ways of protecting people coming in from getting infected by the coronavirus.

4

It is important to seek care if you are feeling sick.

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

Most common: fever · fatigue · cough

Less common:
muscle pain, myalgias, nasal congestion, headache, sore throat, diarrhoea, loss of taste or smell, rash or discoloration of the fingers or toes.

If you develop any of these symptoms call your doctor right away.

Q Should I still go to the doctor for regularly scheduled visits?

It is important to keep your regularly scheduled doctor visits and to stay in touch with your doctor.

Many clinics have established ways to talk to the doctor on the phone without having to physically go to the clinic.

Q Is there anything I should know about my medications with the COVID-19 pandemic?

Do not start or stop any medication without first talking to your doctor.

Take your medications regularly and as prescribed.

Make sure you do not run out of your medication. Ensure supply of all your medications sufficient for 2 to 3 months.

At this time there is no evidence that any medications should be stopped if you develop COVID-19.

5

6

What can I do if I am feeling stressed or anxious?

It is normal to feel anxious and stressed, this is a difficult time that can be very exhausting. Many individuals with chronic diseases may already have underlying depression and/or anxiety. The COVID-19 pandemic can make things more difficult. **It is important to:**

Talk to people you trust about any distressing thoughts or feelings that are causing anxiety, fear, or sadness.

Stay connected to friends and family regularly to maintain social connectedness.

Take a break from COVID-19 related news by decreasing the time you spend on news or social media and seek information only from reliable sources.

Set a daily routine that includes activities that help you relax, such as reading, praying, listening to music, or walking.

Don't resort to smoking or alcohol to deal with the stress.

Maintain a healthy diet, proper sleep and regular physical activity.

If you experience a great deal of distress, be sure to reach out for help: call your friend or family member or your physician. You can also call the National Emotional support hotline: 1564 (12pm to 5:30am).

AVAILABLE HOTLINES

1214
Ministry of Public Health hotline

140
Lebanese Red Cross

1564
National hotline for emotional
support (12pm - 5:30am)

01-594459
COVID-19 hotline

You can also call your physician or Primary Health Care centre

This brochure was produced with
the financial support from UK Aid.

UKaid
from the British people

June 2020