

COVID-19

Q&A ON COVID-19 AND NCDS

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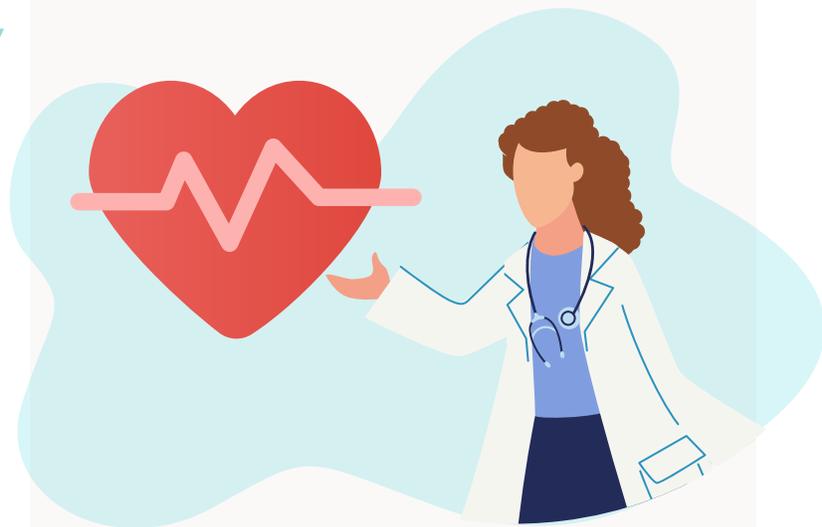
IF I HAVE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT COVID-19?

1 ARE PEOPLE WITH HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE MORE LIKELY TO GET COVID-19?

- People with high blood pressure, especially, if older, are more likely to develop severe symptoms from COVID-19 than those without. There is also higher rate of death from coronavirus among individuals with high blood pressure.

2 IF I HAVE HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, WHAT SHOULD I DO TO AVOID GETTING COVID-19?

- Wash your hands frequently, always avoid touching your face.
- Stay away from anyone who you know is sick.
- Ask family and friends who are sick or could be sick to kindly avoid visiting you.
- Always stay at least 3 feet (1 meter) apart from any other person when you are outside of the house.
- Minimize, and if possible, completely avoid, going to places with large crowds – this includes the stores, supermarkets, and pharmacies. When possible, ask a friend or relative who is healthy to purchase necessary items for you.
- Wear a face mask for protection if you must leave home to go to crowded areas.



3 HOW CAN I PREPARE MYSELF AND MY FAMILY DURING THIS PANDEMIC?

- Planning for essentials like food, water and medicines is critical.
- Ensure that you have an adequate supply of all your medications. Keep at least a 90-day supply, on hand.
- Ensure an adequate supply of healthy food choices.
- Be physically active every day.
- Have cleaning supplies in your home (soap, disinfectants, hand sanitizer).
- Use a reliable home blood pressure monitor to check your blood pressure daily.
- Avoid high blood pressure hazards such as over the counter pain relief medications (eg. ibuprofen, motrin, advil), alcohol, caffeine, and some herbal supplements such as licorice that can raise blood pressure.
- Reduce and manage your stress.
- Have your doctor's phone number handy, somewhere you and your family members can find it easily. Other phone numbers that may be helpful to have on hand are: pharmacy, medical specialists, insurance provider.

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4 WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FEEL ILL?

- You should call your doctor right away.
- There are other reasons, besides COVID-19, that could be causing you to feel ill. With high blood pressure, many other diseases could be serious.
- Recognize a blood pressure emergency. This is when your blood pressure rises above 180/120 mmHg. This can often come with chest pain, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, ankle swelling, headache, change in vision, increasing confusion, difficulty speaking, numbness/weakness, or possibly seizure. Call your doctor immediately.
- Do not be afraid to seek care if you are not well. Most hospitals and clinics have set up ways of protecting people coming in from getting infected by the coronavirus. It is important to get help if you are sick.



- The most important thing is to take your medications regularly as prescribed, and to keep your blood pressure under good control.
- Make sure you do not run out of your medication. Call your pharmacy for a 3-month's supply of all your medications. This makes sure that you don't run out and means you don't have to go to the pharmacy as often.
- At this time there is no evidence that any medications should be stopped if you develop COVID-19.

7 WHAT CAN I DO IF I AM FEELING STRESSED OR ANXIOUS?

- These are trying times that can be very stressful. Many individuals with chronic disease already have a lot on their mind and may have underlying depression and/or anxiety. The COVID-19 pandemic can make things more difficult. Know that you are not alone.
- Be sure to find ways of taking a break from coronavirus news, this provides you with the space to think about your wellbeing.
- Stay connected to friends and family. Call friends and family members regularly to maintain social connectedness.
- Find things that help you relax, such as reading, listening to music, or walking.
- If things become too much, if you experience a great deal of anxiety or depression, be sure to reach out for help: call your friend or family member or call your physician.

5 SHOULD I STILL GO TO THE DOCTOR FOR REGULARLY SCHEDULED VISITS?

- It is important to keep your regularly scheduled doctor visits.
- Many clinics have established ways to talk with the doctor on the phone without having to physically go to the clinic. This keeps you safe by keeping you away from places where you could be exposed to the coronavirus. Be sure to stay in touch with your doctor.

6 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.

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