

**Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) and its associated illness**  **(COVID-19)**

**Update to clarify advice on Social Distancing for Children and Young People**

Dear Patients, Families and colleagues:

You are no doubt aware of the fast changing situation regarding the recently declared global pandemic for COVID-19. COVID-19 is the name given to the illness that people get when infected with a new type of coronavirus that has spread around the world since December 2019.

On Monday 16th March, the government announced additional measures to reduce the spread across the country. They are advising those who are at increased risk to be stringent in following social distancing measures.

**Deciding which patients are at increased risk**

There is a lot of work going continuing to better define who are at increased risk. We know from cases reported from other countries that children, even if they have conditions such as chronic kidney disease, seem to be less affected than adults but currently the government advice is the same for adults and children. This is likely to change in the days and weeks to come.

The government website’s advice on <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> will be updated regularly, and you will be given advice about what to do.

Kidney teams up and down the country are being asked by concerned families what they should do in the meantime hence this guidance.

**Who are the renal high-risk groups currently?**

Public Health England has currently included the following patient groups, but did not specifically address children:

* On Immunosuppression
* Dialysis
* Transplant recipients
* Chronic kidney disease

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

As children appear to be only mildly affected by the Covid-19 infection, we are recommending that the high risk groups are:

* All children on dialysis
* Children with CKD stage 5, awaiting dialysis or awaiting a transplant
* children with CKD stage 4, especially those children who have other co morbidities (other health problems in other organs, such as heart, lungs, liver, and neurology)
* Children with CKD stage 3, if they have other co morbidities (other health problems in other organs, such as heart, lungs, liver, and neurology)
* Children who have had a kidney or other organ transplant
* Children taking immunosuppression

This guidance places children with a GFR <30 ml/min/ SA in the higher risk group.

**What is social distancing?**

1. Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough.
2. Avoid non-essential use of public transport, varying travel times to avoid rush hour, when possible.
3. For teenagers and young people at work, work from home where possible. Your employer should support you to do this.
4. Avoid large gatherings, and gatherings in smaller public spaces such as pubs, cinemas, restaurants, theatres, bars, and clubs.
5. Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media.
6. Use telephone or online services to contact healthcare or other essential services where possible. For many of our patients, coming to clinic and dialysis will still be required.

**Should children in high risk groups go to school?**

The recommendation is not to go to school. For children and young people in at risk groups, it is recommended that they avoid gatherings, which includes going to school.

**What about siblings and other members of the household?**

Siblings and other household members should also consider staying at home to avoid spreading coronavirus to the vulnerable patient. Current advice recommends we should all be taking steps to reduce social interaction between people in order to reduce transmission.

We acknowledge the challenges this will bring but everyone should be trying to follow these measures as much as is pragmatically possible until we have further evidence that this is no longer required. Although these measures are severe, they are considered necessary to keep everyone as safe as possible and to help the NHS cope with the cases that need attention.

**Where can I get more advice?**

Kidney Care UK Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance for patients with kidney disease:

<https://www.kidneycareuk.org/news-and-campaigns/coronavirus-advice/>

NHS Coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Renal Association COVID-19: Information and guidance for renal professionals:

<https://renal.org/covid-19/>

Public Health England Guidance on social distancing for everyone in the UK and protecting older people and vulnerable adults:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

Government guidance will change rapidly. This guidance is current as of 18th March 2020