Important Information for Hemodialysis Patients: Flu & Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Effective March 12, 2020

To help keep everyone safe and provide you with the best care during influenza and coronavirus season, we are giving this handout to all patients coming to hemodialysis units.

We want to reassure you that your dialysis care will continue. We're here to help and support. Please read this carefully and follow the instructions. Also please make sure the hemodialysis unit has your current contact information.

What to do before coming to the hemodialysis unit

Call the dialysis unit if you have any of these symptoms (Unit phone #:_____)

- Fever
- Cough (new onset or worsening chronic cough)
- Difficulty breathing /shortness of breath

If you have symptoms, you may be:

- asked questions over the phone by a nurse and given directions
- given a specific time/date to arrive at the hemodialysis unit; it may be different than your usual dialysis schedule
- asked to make a different plan to get to the unit if you usually take HandyDART

What to do when you get to the hemodialysis unit

Always clean your hands before entering the unit. Hand sanitizers are available in the patient waiting area. Temperatures will be checked for every patient before starting dialysis, every run.

If you have symptoms of the flu or COVID-19, you will be:

- asked to clean your hands and put on a mask
- directed to a specific area or room
- assessed by staff and you may be tested/swabbed for influenza and/or COVID-19
- provided hemodialysis as directed by a nephrologist

Important information about visitors during flu and COVID-19 season

- Visitors/family members are NOT allowed to stay with patients during hemodialysis runs, unless medically necessary. This includes people who show no signs of flu or COVID-19. Drop off and pick up is allowed from the waiting room.
- Visitors/family members are NOT allowed to stay in the waiting room. If you have any important information about your family member/friend's dialysis care, please tell the staff.

- Visitors who are allowed into the hemodialysis unit must wash their hands. They will not be allowed to visit with other patients or visitors during the hemodialysis session.

Guidance on travel

You are strongly advised to cancel or postpone any non-essential travel, likely until September. Patients who have traveled outside BC will be assessed by the renal care team and infection control experts on their return to the hemodialysis unit.

For more information on COVID-19

- Call 8-1-1 to speak with a nurse with HealthLink BC
- Visit the BC Centre for Disease Control website at:
http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19
About COVID-19 → Prevention → What if I have a chronic condition

Precautions in the unlikely event hemodialysis is not available

It's always a good idea to be familiar with the steps you could take if hemodialysis was temporarily unavailable, such as in the case of an earthquake or other natural disaster.

The BC Renal website has a booklet called **Emergency Preparedness Information For Hemodialysis Patients**. It also includes an emergency diet plan and information about medications.

Go to www.bcrenalagency.ca → Health info → Emergency Preparedness