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The Transplantation Society of Australia and New Zealand

FAQs & Advice

The Transplantation Society of Australia and New Zealand provide the following general advice based on current evidence and we will update this advice on a regular basis.

If you have a specific concern, we suggest that you contact your own specialist or hospital for advice, because local conditions and advice vary across Australia.

For regular COVID-19 updates relating to transplantation, please see information on our [website](#).

Q: I am worried about going to a hospital where COVID-19 patients are, will I be near people with the virus?

Hospitals maintain high infection control standards. Hospitals and clinicians are well trained in caring for people with infectious diseases, and in preventing their transmission to other patients.

Q: What do I do when I need to get food or medical supplies if I am supposed to be complying with social distancing?

If you need groceries or medicines (including prescription medicines), ask a family member or friend (who is not in isolation) to deliver them to your home. To prevent infecting other people, make sure receive non-contact delivery.

Q: What should you do if you have hospital and GP appointments during this period? I am worried about travelling from a rural area to the city for my appointments.

We advise everyone to access medical assistance remotely, wherever possible and always call ahead. However, if you have a scheduled hospital or other medical appointment during this period, talk to your GP or clinician to ensure you continue to receive the care you need and consider whether appointments can be postponed. Many clinics are performing telemedicine for remote people consider downloading software such as, facetime (apple), WhatsApp, Skype, etc. so your providers may be able to speak to you face-to face via your tablet/phone.

Q: Will my Dr be available? Are they too busy? What if my Dr has been exposed to someone with the virus, am I safe?

It may be that your Doctor is not available, but health services will provide appropriate clinical advice for consultation as needed.

It is very likely that health services will be stretched during this crisis, but planning is well advanced to make sure appropriate clinic coverage is available.

Health care professionals are acutely aware of the disease transmission routes and should be practicing social distancing and the appropriate use of personal protective equipment.

Q: What if someone I live with someone has COVID-19 symptoms?

Make sure you maintain a safe distance from that person at all times but support them as much as possible to maintain their self-isolation.



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If you are sharing your home with others, you should stay in a different room from other people or be separated as much as possible. Wear a surgical mask when you are in the same room as another person, and when seeking medical care. Use a separate bathroom, if available.

Visitors who do not have an essential need to be in the home should not visit while you are isolating.

Q: I am on immunosuppressing medication, should I stop taking them?

Do not stop taking your medications without speaking with your Dr first. There are risks associated with stopping medication. There is currently no recommendation to change immune system medications for transplant patients. Only undertake this in consultation with your specialist.

Q: Should I wear a face mask to protect me from contracting COVID-19?

Currently, there is no recommendation to wear a face mask if you are not sick or have not been recommended to wear one by a medical professional.

Surgical masks in the community are only helpful in preventing people who have coronavirus disease from spreading it to others.

If you are well, you do not need to wear a surgical mask. There is little evidence that widespread use of surgical masks in healthy people prevents transmission in public.

Q: Are you worried that you or someone you know may have or has COVID-19; or are anxious about being in isolation and would you like to speak to someone about it?

Contact one of the services below for support or talk to your general practitioner.

- [Lifeline Australia: 13 11 14](#) or [Lifeline Australia](#)
A crisis support service that provides short term support at any time for people who are having difficulty coping or staying safe.
 - Kids Helpline: 1800 551800 or [Kids Helpline](#)
A free, private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25 years.
 - Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636 or [Beyond Blue](#)
provides information and support to help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health.
 - Australian Psychological Society: <https://www.psychology.org.au/COVID-19-Australians>
 - [Tips for coping with coronavirus anxiety](#)
 - [Maintaining your mental health during social isolation](#)
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RESOURCES

<u>General information</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australian Department of Health: Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for public gatherings and visits to vulnerable groups• New Zealand Ministry of Health: Latest COVID-19 updates• Kidney Health Australia: Latest COVID-19 updates• World Health Organization: Q&A on COVID-19• Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (Dept. of Health): COVID-19 statement• Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: FAQs
<u>Sites with relevant information for vulnerable people;</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• UK Government: Guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable persons from COVID-19• American Society of Transplantation: FAQs from transplant candidates and recipients• Cleveland Clinic: FAQs about COVID-19 and chronic medical conditions
<u>Specific advice examples;</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alfred Hospital (Victoria): Heart and Lung Transplant advice• British Heart Foundation: Heart or circulatory disease• Crohn's and Colitis Disease: COVID-19 advice• American Lung Association: COVID-19 update• Kidney Care UK: COVID-19 advice• British Liver Trust: COVID-19 advice for people with liver disease and liver transplant patients• NHS UK – Pancreas Transplant risk: Information and advice• Royal Australian and NZ Pregnancy: COVID-19 advice and information
<u>Jurisdictional advice</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ACT Health: Latest news• Northern Territory Government: Update• NSW Health: FAQs• Queensland Health: COVID-19 update• South Australia Health: COVID-19 update• Tasmanian Department of Health: FAQs• Victoria Health and Human Services: COVID-19 updates• Western Australia Department of Health: COVID-19 updates