**Information about Coronavirus (COVID-19)**

**What is coronavirus (COVID-19)?**

Coronavirus (COVID-19) can cause illnesses similar to the common cold, but it can also cause more serious respiratory disease. At this stage, most people in our local community displaying symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, tiredness or shortness of breath are likely suffering with a cold or other respiratory illness, not coronavirus. However, the threats posed by the virus means serious steps must be taken to stop the spread of the disease in the coming weeks.

**How does the coronavirus spread?**

The coronavirus is most likely to spread from person-to-person through:

- Direct close contact with a person while they are infectious
- Close contact with a person with a confirmed infection when they cough or sneeze, or
- Touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) contaminated from a cough or sneeze from a person with a confirmed infection, and then immediately touching your mouth or face.

**What do I do if I develop symptoms?**

If you develop symptoms (fever, a cough, sore throat, tiredness or shortness of breath) within 14 days of leaving a country or region that is at higher risk for COVID-19, or within 14 days of last contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19, you should arrange to see your doctor for urgent assessment.

You should telephone your GP clinic or hospital before you arrive and tell them your travel history or that you may have been in contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus. You must remain isolated either in your home or a healthcare setting until public health authorities inform you it is safe for you to return to your usual activities.

If you are unwell but unsure if you need testing for coronavirus, you can call the Department of Health & Human Services coronavirus hotline on 1800 675 398.

**Who is most at risk of a serious illness?**

Some people who are infected may not get sick at all, some will get mild symptoms from which they will recover easily, and others may quickly become very ill. The people at most risk of serious infection are:

- People with weakened immune systems (e.g. on immunosuppression medication)
- Elderly people
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as they have higher rates of chronic illness
- People with diagnosed chronic medical conditions
- People in group residential settings such as aged care homes
- People in detention or correctional facilities.

COVID-19: Your Care

Changes to Renal Transplant Appointments

We are advising our patients not to physically attend their outpatient clinic appointments unless urgent or specifically instructed to do so. In the current situation of COVID-19 advancing though Australia, some of your appointments will be changed to Telehealth, this is to minimize your exposure by allowing you to stay in your own environment. However, if you have any pending investigations or procedures at the Alfred, it is still encouraged that you attend

**Telehealth**

You will require telehealth access. (Further information has been provided)

A Telehealth consultation is as convenient as a phone call, with the added value of face-to-face communication. You can see, hear, and speak with your Nephrologist, almost as though you were there in person:

- You don't need to travel to Alfred Health for a medical consultation
- You can use telehealth on most laptops, desktop computers, tablets, or smartphones (e.g. iPhone)
- It saves you travel time and related expenses

**What is required for Telehealth Appointment?**

Prior to your Telehealth appointment please make sure the following has been done:

- Please make sure that you access you telehealth login PRIOR to your appointment (to allow time to troubleshoot / address any issues.
- Blood and urine tests have been done (Please see ‘Blood slip’ for instruction)
- Blood Pressure monitoring equipment is available at your home (An arm cuff is preferred, these are available for purchase at most chemists)
- Weight Scales are available at your home.
- Please be ready to tell your doctor what medications scripts you require. These will be posted every Monday.

**Face to Face Clinics**

If you are required to come into the Alfred Hospital for review, these bookings will be made by our bookings team, and you will be notified.

Outpatient clinic will remain at Monday to Friday 7:30AM – 8.30 AM, Level 2 Outpatients, Phillip Block
**Blood Slips**

Provided in this pack is a series of blood slips. Follow these steps:

1. Have your bloods taken **two days prior** to your Telehealth appointment.
2. Have your bloods taken at **Melbourne Pathology, Dorevitch** or **Alfred Health** pathology services **only**.
3. Contact the Renal Transplant Coordinator when you require more bloods slips. These will be sent by post, so allow ample time for us to post them.

**Prescriptions**

**Medication Scripts**

The Renal Transplant team in conjunction with the Pharmacy department at the Alfred Hospital will be posting out scripts to your home address.

**It is your responsibility to alert the medical team if you are running low on any medications.**

Required scripts will be posted out every Monday, so please allow ample time for us to post them. Please do not attend the ward for scripts.

**Flu Vaccinations**

The Alfred Health Renal Department recommends flu vaccination for everyone when it becomes available in April to protect you in the coming winter flu season. However, the influenza vaccination will not protect you against COVID-19.

**Please make an appointment with your GP to have your flu vaccination.**

**Medical Letter**

To prevent your exposure to COVID-19, it is highly recommended by the Alfred Health Renal Department, to work remotely / from home if you are in a position to do so.

If you require a medical letter to provide to your employer, please contact the Renal Transplant Coordinators (Contact details on last page).

Regardless of the current outbreak, it is good practice to prevent any respiratory infections. The most important thing you can do is to wash your hands often with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizer is effective.
Important Contact Information

Make sure your phone is available and switched on at all times. You may need to be contacted with important medical advice

COVID-19 Hotline

For advice related to COVID-19, symptoms and testing, please call the:

Coronavirus hotline: 1800 675 398

Renal Transplant Coordinator

Emma Giles
Email: e.giles@alfred.org.au
Phone: 03 90766530
Monday, Wednesday, Friday – 0730 to 1600 hrs

Ann Weston
Email: a.weston@alfred.org.au
Phone: 03 9076 0835
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday – 0730 to 1600 hrs

Renal Register

For urgent kidney related issues, call the Alfred Health Switchboard and ask for the Renal Register on-call.

The Alfred: 03 9076 2000

If you are enquiring about COVID-19 the advice you will be given by the renal team will be to call the Coronavirus hotline

Outpatient bookings

If you are unable to attend, or need to change your telehealth booking time call:

Outpatient booking 03 9076 3795 between 8:15am – 4:30pm, Monday to Friday
or email: outpatient@alfred.org.au