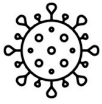


COVID-19: Information for Congenital & Rheumatic Heart Disease Patients



What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a new illness caused by a virus. People around the world have been affected. Each area has been affected differently by Covid-19. **Your local health experts have the most up-to-date information on COVID-19 in your area.**



What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Common signs are fever, cough, tiredness, body pain, problems breathing, and loss of taste or smell. Many people with COVID-19 do not have symptoms. **You can pass COVID-19 to others even if you have no symptoms.**



What can I do to protect myself and others from COVID-19?

If COVID-19 is common in your area stay home as much as you can. Frequently wash your hands with soap. Keep at least two meters (6 feet) from other people. Wear a mask over your nose and mouth when you are in public.



Is COVID-19 more dangerous for people with congenital or rheumatic heart disease (CHD or RHD)?

If you have CHD or RHD you may be at higher risk than people with healthy hearts. You may have heart problems that make you more likely to get very sick or die from COVID-19. These include:

- Heart valve problems
- Heart rhythm problems
- Problems with heart strength or heart failure
- Previous heart attack
- Previous stroke
- Having low oxygen or being “blue”
- Having one heart ventricle or Fontan
- Heart transplant

You may have other health problems that raise your risk. These include:

- High lung pressure or pulmonary hypertension
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Kidney problems
- Weak immune system
- Being very overweight or obese
- Smoking
- Down Syndrome or DiGeorge Syndrome
- Pregnancy
- Age over 60

If you have CHD or RHD but do not have any of the problems above your risk is lower. But it may still be higher than people with normal hearts.

Do blood thinners raise the risk of COVID-19?

No. Blood thinners do not raise the risk of COVID-19.



Do other heart medicines raise the risk of COVID-19?

Other heart medicines do not raise the risk of Covid-19. This includes blood pressure medicine, heart rhythm medicine, heart failure medicine and antibiotics.

Are there drugs that prevent, treat, or cure Covid-19?

There are no drugs that prevent or cure Covid-19. There are some drugs that can prevent serious illness and help patients get better faster. Antibiotics do not prevent or treat Covid-19.



Are there vaccines that prevent Covid-19?

COVID-19 vaccines are now available in many countries. These vaccines are safe for people with CHD and RHD. Unless your care team tells you not to, get vaccinated as soon as you can.

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How dangerous is COVID-19 for children with CHD and RHD?

Children with CHD and RHD may be at higher risk from COVID-19 than heart-healthy children. This is especially true if they have any of the health problems listed above. But the risk to children is much lower than the risk to adults. The large majority of children who get COVID-19 have no or mild symptoms. Only a very small number of CHD/RHD children have gotten very sick from COVID-19. Almost all of these children have survived.



Should I keep my CHD/RHD child home from school if COVID-19 is common in my area?

Most children with CHD and RHD can go to school if it is open. But if your child's heart problems are severe, check with your care team. They can advise you about how best to protect your child's health.



Should I go to the clinic for my regular scheduled heart check-up?

Check with your heart care team before going to any regular visits. If COVID-19 is common in your area these visits may be delayed.



What should I do if I/my child has a date to have surgery or other interventions?

If Covid-19 is common in your area non-emergency surgeries and interventions may be cancelled. Many can be safely delayed if needed. Contact the hospital to find out whether your/your child's treatment will be postponed.



What should I do if I/my child has new heart symptoms?

If you or your child has a new heart problem, contact your care team about next steps. **Immediately** seek medical help if you or your child becomes more blue, more breathless, has a very fast heartbeat, or becomes dizzy or drowsy. Go to the nearest hospital for care. If possible, call in advance so they can plan for your treatment.



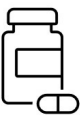
Can heart valves, pacemakers, or other objects in the heart or chest get infected by COVID-19?

No. COVID-19 will not infect any kind of object in the heart or chest.



What should I do if I/my child needs penicillin injections but cannot get to the clinic?

Contact your healthcare team to let them know. They may be able to give you penicillin pills to keep you/your child protected.



What should I do if I/my child takes blood thinner and cannot get to a testing site?

Contact your healthcare team to see if they can help. Let them know about any signs that your levels are too high or too low such as bleeding gums, bruises or dark spots on skin, and sudden dizziness or numbness. Shutdowns can also change what you eat. This can affect your blood thinner levels. Try to keep to the same diet as much as you can.



What should I do if I think I might have COVID-19?

If you, your child, or anyone in your household develops symptoms, immediately isolate the sick person. **DO NOT rush to the hospital or clinic.** Contact your heart team by phone to discuss. In most cases, fever and other symptoms will get better in a few days. If symptoms do not improve or become worse, ask your doctor for advice.

For more information and references visit
www.global-arch.org