

COVID-19 Winter Update: What Transplant Recipients Need to Know



Hosted by
Blood & Marrow Transplant Information Network

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COVID-19 & Transplant

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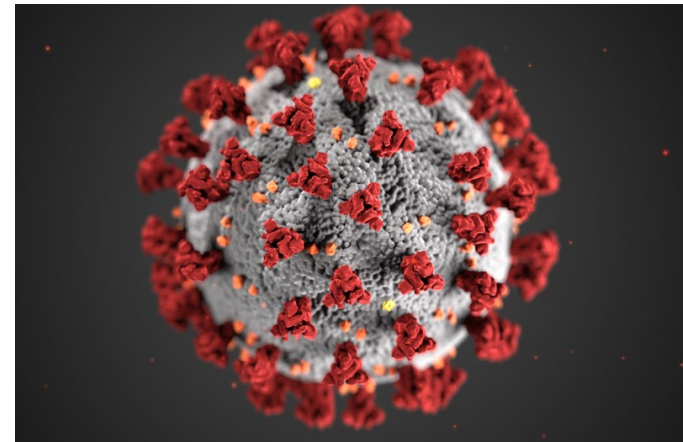
HARVARD
MEDICAL SCHOOL

Outline

- What is COVID-19?
- How does COVID-19 spread?
- How to protect yourself against COVID-19
- Is it safe to have a transplant during COVID-19 pandemic?
- Contact with people who have had COVID
- Treatments and vaccines for COVID-19

What is COVID-19?

- Novel virus: member of the coronaviruses
- First documented outbreak in Wuhan, China
- Average time to showing symptoms is 4-5 days, but range 1-14 days
- As of 11/2/2020: 9,105,230 cases US, 229,932 deaths
- Across the world: 45,942,902 cases, 1,192,644 deaths

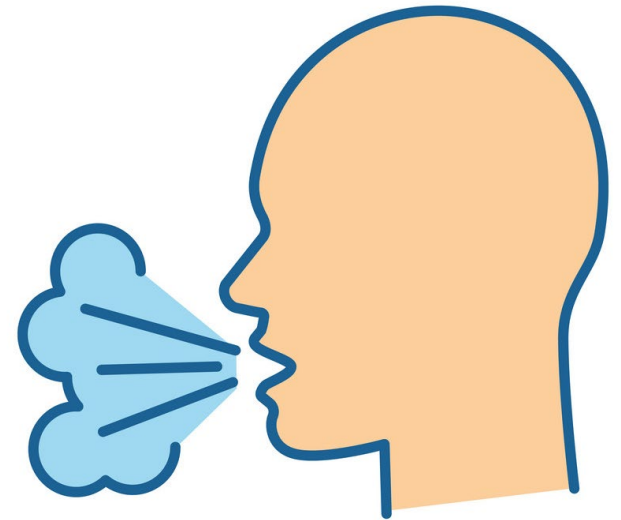


What is COVID-19?

- In adults: 80.9% cases are mild, 13.8% severe, 4.7% critical
- Children can have mild symptoms or be asymptomatic (15-35%)
- Severe disease in children < 3% of cases, mostly due to underlying medical conditions, or infants
- 15-25% of patients require hospitalization and potentially ICU-level of care
- People who are asymptomatic can still spread the virus – not main cause of spread

How does COVID-19 spread?

- Primarily transmitted between people who are in close contact with one another (within 6 feet)
- It primary spreads through respiratory droplet or small particles when an infected person coughs, sneezes, sings, talks, or breathes



How does COVID-19 spread?

- Droplets can also land on surfaces/objects and be transferred by touch, but this is not the main way of spread
- COVID-19 can be stable up to 72 hours on plastic and stainless steel. On cardboard < 24 hours
- Some evidence that some droplets can stay suspended and can be a source of infection

How to protect yourself and others?

- Wear a mask in public settings!! Regular masks are fine
- Wash your hands often: soap & water at least 20 seconds, especially if you have been in a public area.
- If no soap and water, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol



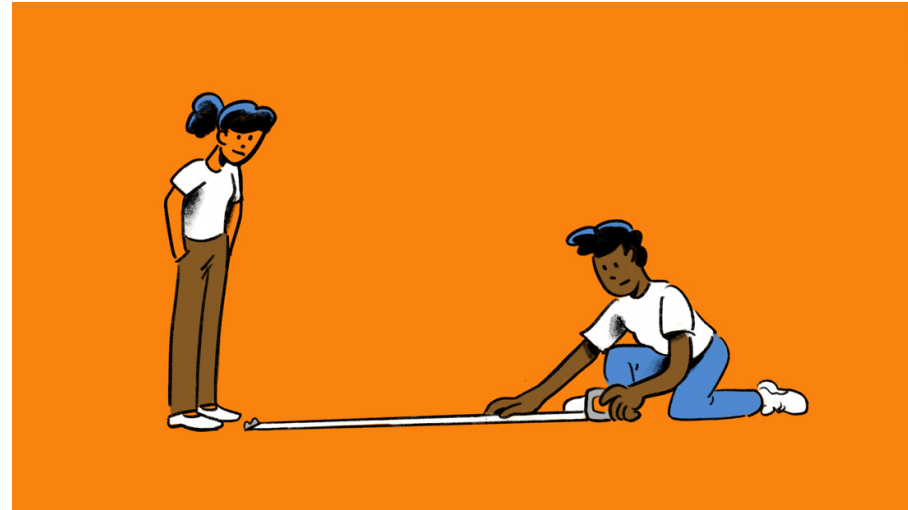
How to protect yourself and others?

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Avoid close contact, maintain 6 feet between people
- Always cover your mouth and nose with tissue when you cough or sneeze. Then wash your hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily



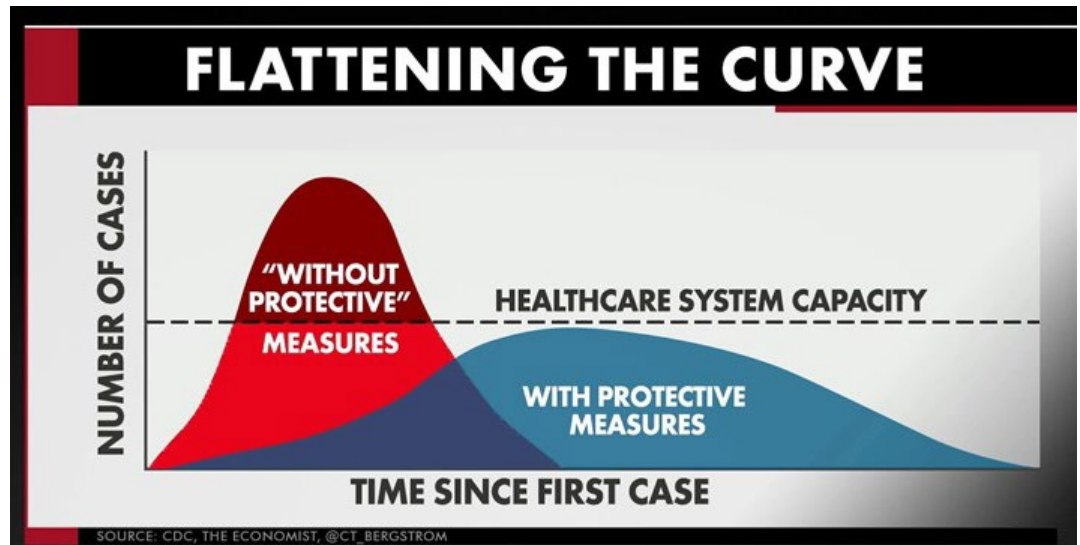
How to protect yourself and others?

- Stay home as much as possible
- Okay to walk outside, stay 6 feet away from others
- Cancel all travel
- Be careful around the holidays



The public health problem

- Social responsibility
- Importance of social distancing even if you are low risk
- You can save lives



Is it safe to have a transplant during COVID-19?

- Most people who need a transplant cannot afford to wait
- Hospitals taking a lot of extra precautions to keep transplant floors safe
- Talk to your doctor – if you think your transplant can be delayed
- In some ways, we are seeing less colds/infections in our transplant recipients because everyone is wearing masks!
- So general answer: yes, it is safe to have a transplant during COVID-19, but talk to your doctor about balancing risks and benefits

How risky is COVID-19 in transplant recipients?

- Limited data thus far, largest study from Spain 113 patients
- 88% transplant recipients are hospitalized with COVID-19
- 21% severe illness, 6% ICU level of care, 22% died
- Most of these patients were on immunosuppression (corticosteroids, tacrolimus, sirolimus, etc.)
- Other studies have suggested higher risk of COVID-19 in patients with blood cancers
- Patients who are > 2 years out from transplant and off immunosuppression are likely similar risk to general population

Contact with people who have had COVID-19

- It is safe for people who had mild-moderate COVID-19 to be around others after:
 - 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and**
 - 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and**
 - Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving
- Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery
- Most people do not require testing to be around others



Contact with people who have had COVID-19

- If someone was severely ill with COVID-19, or was immunocompromised when they got COVID:
 - May need to avoid contact for up to 20 days after symptoms
 - Immunocompromised may need testing to determine if it is safe for them to be around others
 - Talk to your doctors about these scenarios
- If you do have contact with someone who had COVID-19
 - Stay home for 14 days after your last exposure!

Available Treatments for COVID-19

- Supportive care to help relieve symptoms. People with mild symptoms can recover at home
- Remdesivir – approved for COVID-19 requiring hospital stay
- Dexamethasone: decrease risk of dying in hospitalized patients with COVID-19 on oxygen

Treatments for COVID-19 Under Investigation

- Monoclonal antibodies: may decrease hospitalizations
- Convalescent plasma (antibodies from people who recovered from COVID-19): ? May reduce risk of dying
- Data do not support hydroxychloroquine or azithromycin for COVID-19 prevention or treatment

What about COVID-19 vaccines?

- Four clinical trials investigating vaccines available in the United States
- Several additional vaccines in phase 3 trials around the world
- Most trials with inactivated vaccines that are theoretically safe for transplant recipients
- If you are > 2 years after transplant with no graft-versus-host disease and off immunosuppression → vaccine will likely be safe
- If you are on immunosuppression, talk to your doctor, vaccine will still likely be safe, but helpful to have more data depending on which vaccine is approved first.

Resources

- Centers for Disease Control (CDC):
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- How to protect yourself from the CDC:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>