



## Coronavirus: COVID-19 Information for transplant professionals

A new type of coronavirus (COVID-19) has been widely publicised in the national press.

This document provides information about COVID-19 for transplant professionals. The current advice is changing daily and professionals are advised to refer to NHS and government resources for the most up to date advice.

The latest information for the public

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public#information-about-the-virus>

Advice for health professionals

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

Government response

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>

### Patients with solid organ transplants

There is insufficient data on patients with COVID-19 to draw a conclusion on the effects of immunosuppression but immunosuppressed patients are likely to be at greater risk.

Transplant patients are advised to follow national advice

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

If patients suspect that they may have COVID-19, they should contact NHS 111.

<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19>

- Patients who have symptoms or contact with COVID-19 patients are advised not to attend their GP, Emergency Department or transplant unit, as this increases the risk of spreading the virus further and putting other patients and staff at risk
- If a patient is diagnosed with COVID-19, it is recommended that the patient inform their transplant unit and they be monitored remotely during self-isolation. Any deterioration in condition should be referred back through NHS 111 for further evaluation
- Patients must be reminded not to stop their immunosuppression in the event of infection, unless recommended to do so by a transplant professional
- Patients returning from overseas must be managed in line with national advice, as above.

### Reducing the risk to patients

National guidance on general hygiene and use of personal protection equipment (PPE) must be followed at all times

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

The advice includes, regular handwashing, alcohol gel use, avoidance of touching your face and maintaining a personal distance at all times.

- Patients are advised to avoid contact with other people who are unwell

- Trusts are advised to avoid placing patients with respiratory symptoms in similar clinical areas to transplant recipients
- As the outbreak progresses, it is likely that immunosuppressed patients may be asked to limit their movements and activities to reduce their risk of infection
- Levels of immunosuppression should be reviewed but generalised immunosuppression reduction that may jeopardise organ function is not recommended
- Transplant units are advised to consider ways to limit hospital attendances for patients, such as:
  - rescheduling non urgent out-patient appointments
  - virtual or telemedicine appointments
  - home delivery of immunosuppression

### **Organ donors**

Each deceased organ donor should be assessed in line with advice from NHS BT

<https://www.odt.nhs.uk/deceased-donation/covid-19-advice-for-clinicians/>

Potential living donors should be assessed in line with GOV.UK and NHS BT policy to evaluate their risk of having COVID-19. Donors who are at risk of COVID-19 or are self-isolating are not to be considered for organ donation.

### **Acute transplantation**

There is no evidence-based guidance on the risk of acute transplantation during a viral outbreak.

- Transplant units need to be aware that public health measures and availability of critical care beds may pose restrictions on their ability to undertake organ transplants
- Recipients with active COVID-19 or recovering from an acute COVID-19 infection should not undergo transplantation
- The decision to undertake transplantation during the outbreak will need to be made on a case by case basis where the risk of infection at a time of peak immunosuppression must be balanced against the risk of organ failure or treatment of organ failure
- Patients for transplantation must be counselled about the risks and benefits of each option.
- In the event of more widespread infection or reduced availability of resources for the care of recipients and/or living donors, a temporary suspension of acute transplant activities may be necessary.

### **Guidance to staff**

Transplant units are recommended to follow national guidance regarding health professionals

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

- Consideration should be given to planning for significant numbers of staff self-isolating.
- Each unit is advised to risk assess the local situation so that there is a plan in place to manage unexpected cases of Covid-19 should they presenting to the transplant unit Particular reference to be made to rapid isolation and containment of the patient away from other patients and staff.
- All transplant units must be aware of national and local guidance for managing patients with COVID-19.

Information correct as of March 12<sup>th</sup> 2020. Please refer to the [BTS website](#) to ensure that you are using the latest update of this information