



## COVID-19 Information for Sickle Cell Families

Dear Families,

We understand that coronavirus (COVID-19) is at the forefront of everyone's minds these days and that you may have questions about its impact on sickle cell disease. We encourage all patients and families to stay informed of the latest updates regarding the guidelines and recommendations for COVID-19 by visiting the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)

### Chronic Illness and High Risk Populations:

We recommend you use the CDC "People at Risk for Serious Illness from COVID-19" as a resource for this topic: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html)

In that section, the CDC website states: "If a COVID-19 outbreak happens in your community, it could last for a long time. (An outbreak is when a large number of people suddenly get sick.) Depending on how severe the outbreak is, public health officials may recommend community actions to reduce people's risk of being exposed to COVID-19. These actions can slow the spread and reduce the impact of disease. If you are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 because of your age or because you have a serious long-term health problem, it is extra important for you to take actions to reduce your risk of getting sick with the disease."

### CDC Recommendations for High Risk Populations:

- Take everyday precautions to keep space between yourself and others: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html#take-everyday-precautions](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/high-risk-complications.html#take-everyday-precautions)
- When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash your hands often.
- Reduce the frequency of large gatherings (e.g., assemblies), and limit the number of attendees per gathering.
- Avoid cruise ship travel and non-essential air travel. Cruise ship passengers are at increased risk of person-to-person spread of infectious diseases, including COVID-19.



- During a COVID-19 outbreak in your community, stay home as much as possible to further reduce your risk of being exposed.
- Alter schedules to reduce mixing (e.g., stagger recess, entry/dismissal times)

### **School Attendance**

- We value school attendance and do not want to isolate children with sickle cell disease. At the same time, we want to decrease the risk of COVID-19 for children with sickle cell disease, which may involve limiting school interactions and/or distance learning (e-learning) in some settings.
- We recommend that you consult your child's teacher, school guidance counselor or principal to discuss alternatives to in-school attendance, especially if there is a local exposure in your community.
- Consult your child's school or your local health department for regular updates regarding local exposure in your community. Additional information and recommendations about COVID-19 can be found at your local school district's website.
- If there is an exposure in your school or community and your school does not close, please consult your medical provider. You can seek additional advice from your hematology provider and social worker regarding school attendance.

### **Is it safe to come to my child's appointment in the hospital?**

Children's National Hospital is committed to the safety of all patients and has strict infection control policies in place. These policies are evolving as the number of infected patients in the DMV area changes. Please be prepared for additional time for screening when arriving and check our website for the most updated visiting policy. Only two caregivers are allowed to accompany patients. Siblings of any age are not allowed to accompany the patient.

### **Is it safe for my child to have visitors in the hospital?**

Please refer to the Children's National Hospital website for the most updated visiting policy. Right now, only two primary caregivers may visit. Everyone else, including siblings, may not visit. All visitors are screened upon entry to the building. Limiting visitors may help keep your child safe.



### **Can I stay with my child in the hospital if I have symptoms of COVID-19?**

Children's National Hospital is committed to the safety of all patients and has strict infection control policies in place. Two healthy parents or guardians may visit each child.

### **What will happen if my child or any family members may have been exposed to COVID-19 and has to come in for scheduled treatment?**

Please inform your doctor of your child's/your exposure prior to arrival. If your child needs to be seen, please send a primary caregiver who has not been exposed with the child. If that is not possible, please let your doctor know.

### **Please refer to the following resources for the most updated information:**

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)
- District of Columbia Government: <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/>
- Maryland Department of Health: <https://phpa.health.maryland.gov/Pages/Novel-coronavirus.aspx>
- Virginia Department of Health: <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/surveillance-and-investigation/novel-coronavirus/>

We understand that the information about COVID-19 and its effects in local communities change daily, including the recommendations from the CDC and local Departments of Health (DC, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia); therefore, please visit these sites regularly to stay informed about COVID-19 locally and nationally.