

December 22

Dear Sir or Madam

Re: Winter 22 /23 COVID-19 – information for patients on how to keep safe and avoid Covid-19 when attending outpatient haemodialysis treatment.

You have been given this letter because you are a person receiving haemodialysis treatment. We wish to update you as to how to keep safe and avoid contracting or passing Covid-19 on whilst in the dialysis unit or hospital transport.

People with kidney disease continue to be more likely to contract Covid-19 due to their weakened immune systems. Some of you will also be taking medications that suppress your immune system further increasing the risk even more. Whilst the risk of becoming very unwell or dying from Covid-19 is much reduced, it remains a very unpleasant illness for some and better avoided.

You will notice in the community that signs of Covid restrictions have all but disappeared. However, in a hospital or clinical setting we are still required to take precautions. This is to prevent the spread of the disease whilst you are in our care.

We continue to isolate people with Covid-19 at the Charing Cross unit. The Charing Cross unit has been chosen as it has good access to treatments for Covid, maintains the efficiency of the transport service and is on a hospital site with access to emergency care if required. We recognise that this can be unsettling and inconvenient but please be assured, your safety is of the highest priority and no decisions are taken without serious thought and consideration.

Please continue to follow the guidance for people with kidney disease below whilst in the unit or travelling by hospital transport:

- We still see Covid outbreaks where a number of patients are infected due to a positive patient mixing with other people without correct mask wearing. We ask you to wear your mask correctly and to continue to respect social distancing whilst in the unit and not to walk around to chat to others.
- You should only remove your mask whilst in your dialysis chair to eat or drink.
- We ask you to wear a mask correctly whilst on transport.
- We will check your temperature when you enter the unit and you will be asked about any symptoms (temperature, headache, cough, runny nose, loss of taste or smell, upset stomach, diarrhoea, vomiting, loss of appetite).
- You must wash or gel your hands on arrival, and wear a face covering at all times
- Dialysis chairs are spaced by two metre to maintain social distancing

- If you develop any symptoms at home, please call the dialysis centre **before** you come in for dialysis. This is to reduce contact with other patients. Your dialysis **must** continue, we will arrange testing and transfer you to Charing Cross if positive
- If you have symptoms of Covid-19 you will need to travel in alone if you require the patient transport service
- We recommend keep a supply of lateral flow tests at home which are available for free via the government website.
- Please DO NOT share any food with others.

Further information to minimise risk:

- If you have been told you have been in contact with a person who has tested positive for Covid-19, you must inform us so that we can arrange to test you. We also recommend that you check a lateral flow yourself at home.
- You should have had your vaccine booster by now. Please speak to the team if you have not.
- If you are offered a vaccine by your GP please accept it. Nationally there are efforts from renal organisations to bring you to the top of the list for Covid-19 vaccinations.

If you have any questions, please raise them with the dialysis unit team or Head nurse. Yours sincerely

Helen watts – Lead Nurse
Dr Marie Condon – Clinical Director