

# Corona virus/COVID- 19 – information for people with liver disease and people who have had a liver transplant

## Liver Unit, Addenbrookes Hospital

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### What is coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called coronavirus.

### What do I do if I think that I might have coronavirus?

The symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a cough
- a high temperature
- shortness of breath

But it is important to remember that these symptoms are also seen with other illnesses and do not necessarily mean that you have COVID-19. Other illnesses that are much more common with similar symptoms are cold and flu.

The situation is changing rapidly and national websites are being updated frequently. For information on what you should do if you think you have had contact with coronavirus, or have symptoms of coronavirus, please follow the link:

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

Further information about the risk level in the UK and what the government is doing is located here:

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

### Should I go to my liver or transplant clinic if I think I have coronavirus or have a cough, temperature or shortness of breath?

No. You should not go to your routine clinic appointments if you have coronavirus or symptoms of coronavirus.

## Should I keep taking my medications for my liver during the outbreak?

- **I have had a liver transplant**

You are much more at risk if you stop taking your antirejection medication than if you continue to take them. Antirejection medication being - prednisolone, azathioprine, mycophenolate, tacrolimus, cyclosporine, sirolimus. The worst case scenario would be if you started to reject your transplanted liver (meaning that you need more antirejection medication).

Please continue to take all your medication as normal. Follow the guidance in the blue box to protect you from catching the virus, and if you get symptoms please follow the advice on the NHS coronavirus website (link above).

If you are admitted to hospital with coronavirus, the transplant team will be able to advise if there are changes needed to your medication. The recommendation will vary from person to person. The medical team looking after you will be able to contact us directly to discuss things further – you do not need to make contact with us separately.

- **I have autoimmune liver disease**

You are much more at risk if you stop taking your immunosuppressive medication than if you continue to take them. Immunosuppressive medication being - prednisolone, azathioprine, mycophenolate, tacrolimus. The worst case scenario would be if your autoimmune hepatitis flared (meaning that you need more immunosuppressive medication).

Please continue to take all your medication as normal. Follow the guidance in the blue box to protect you from catching the virus, and if you get symptoms please follow the advice on the NHS coronavirus website (link above).

If you are admitted to hospital with coronavirus, the Hepatology team will be able to advise if there are changes needed to your medication. The recommendation will vary from person to person. The medical team looking after you will be able to contact us directly to discuss things further – you do not need to make contact with us separately.

- **I have any other type of liver disease**

Please continue to take all your medication as normal. Follow the guidance in the blue box to protect you from catching the virus, and if you get symptoms please follow the advice on the NHS coronavirus website (link above).

## **How do I avoid catching or spreading coronavirus?**

### **DO!**

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- always wash your hands when you get home or into work
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin straight away and wash your hands afterwards
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell

### **DON'T!**

- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

## **What can my friends and family do to help me avoid catching coronavirus?**

- It is a good idea that anyone coming to visit you in your home including children wash their hands or use alcohol gel immediately on arrival to minimise the risk of bringing coronavirus into your home.