

Diabetes, Hypertension and Heart Diseases, and COVID-19

Everyone can get infected with COVID-19. For most people, COVID-19 is mild, however in up to 15% of cases, COVID-19 can be severe.

Current data shows that older adults and people living with diabetes, hypertension and heart diseases may be more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with COVID-19 i.e. more likely to experience severe symptoms and complications. For example, when people with diabetes catch a viral infection, it can be more difficult to treat due to fluctuations in blood glucose levels and in some, presence of diabetes-related complications. This could be because the immune system is compromised, particularly if the diabetes is not well controlled.

Therefore, it is important for people living with diabetes, hypertension and heart diseases to take extra precautions to avoid COVID-19. The health advisories issued by the Ministry of Health (MOH) to the general public, to maintain a high level of personal hygiene, washing hands regularly and avoid touching your face, avoid crowded public places, are even more important for people living with these chronic diseases and anyone in close contact with people living with diabetes, hypertension and heart diseases.

If you have these chronic diseases, and diabetes in particular, you should also:

1. Pay extra attention to your blood glucose levels.
2. If you have symptoms of respiratory tract infection (e.g. fever, cough, difficulty breathing), please seek immediate treatment.
3. Any infection can cause dehydration, so make sure you are drinking enough fluids while waiting to see the doctor.
4. Ensure that that you have adequate supply of medications, particularly if you are placed under the 14-day home surveillance.
5. Make sure you have the contact details of your doctor, clinic, pharmacy, key family members/carers and other relevant people to hand in case you need them.
6. If you live alone, please arrange for someone who knows that you have diabetes, hypertension and heart diseases to provide assistance if you become unwell.

To date, the nature of COVID-19 infection is not yet fully understood. Therefore, we encourage people living with diabetes, hypertension and heart diseases to keep informed of the latest developments from MOH's websites and other official/reliable sources.

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