



Dear Transplant Patient,

As cases of the new coronavirus (COVID-19) have increased in San Diego County, we understand you may have questions and concerns. This message contains important information for transplant patients, health tips and more. Please help us in our efforts to protect you and others as we work to stop the spread of this virus.

COVID-19 symptoms can range from very mild flu-like illness to severe pneumonia. Symptoms can include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Newer evidence suggests that some are completely without symptoms and recover uneventfully.

The most important things you can do is clean your hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, and be certain you are current on all your appropriate vaccinations (seasonal influenza, pneumonia, pertussis, and shingles). You should also practice social distancing and consider socially isolating yourself if you are on active treatments that may compromise your immune system. Further recommendations for high risk individuals can be found at [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

Please remember, because you are taking immunosuppressive medications, you and your significant other, family and friends all need to take special precautions around you and respect your need to social distance yourself. There are many free options, such as social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and video services (FaceTime, etc.), to help you all keep in touch and communicate without putting yourself at risk.

We expect to offer planned care throughout this crisis. Our team of doctors, nurses and coordinators will always place your best interest first; weighing the potential risks of your disease, the risks of your treatment, and the benefits of the treatment. **Transplant recipients should contact their transplant center immediately if they test positive or have symptoms of COVID-19. If you develop symptoms of an infection or other issue, please let your care team know.**

Below is additional important information:

Transplant triage nurse

We have a dedicated transplant triage nurse who is available to answer your questions by phone. Any transplant patient, transplant caregiver or transplant family member can call our main office at 858-554-4310 to ask questions related to COVID-19, from 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday. If you use MyScripps for an inquiry, your questions will be routed to the triage nurse who will answer them in MyScripps.

Transplant trailer for bloodwork

We have opened a medical trailer at the back of Scripps Green Hospital where blood can be drawn as a drive-up service so patients can stay in their cars. To help protect you, we are asking patients to use this blood draw location instead of going to a public facility, like LabCorp, Quest or a Scripps Clinic lab location. Patients can call 858-554-4310 to schedule an appointment and receive directions to the trailer.

Organ donation

We know that timing is critical for transplant patients, some of whom have been waiting for years for an organ. Unfortunately, the current COVID-19 pandemic is likely to reduce donation and transplant activity, and lead to longer waiting times than normal. Every day we are learning more about the virus, but do not yet know everything there is to know, and that means surgery can pose many potential unknown risks. For instance, if the donor has the infection, it could be passed on to you and could cause a serious or life-threatening infection or interfere with your anti-rejection medication. Our surgical and medical staff, and possibly other patients, could also be at risk for exposure and infection if the organ is infected or has been exposed to the virus. For information about surgical precautions and protocols, and accepting a donated organ during this outbreak, please contact our office at 858-554-4310.

Medications and continuous therapy

It is important for transplant patients to continue medications and follow-up testing. Please attempt to acquire a 90-day supply of your medication. You may need to contact your insurance company to reinforce the importance of continuous therapy. Our office will do everything we can to support you in this important effort.

We are here to help you during this difficult time. For more details and the latest updates, visit scripps.org/covid19.

Your Scripps Center for Organ and Cell Transplantation Providers