



# KIDNEY KRONICLE:



## SPECIAL EDITION COVID-19

### MESSAGE FROM THE PFAC CHAIR



*Betty Clinton*

I have been a member of the Renal Patient Advisory Committee for five years now, most recently as vice-chair. My son was a dialysis patient for 15 years and I joined the committee as a family member. My intentions in joining this committee was to be part of a committee that assisted all renal patients in trying to improve the care they receive. I saw that this committee was

dedicated to assisting patients and their family's with their non-medical questions and concerns.

The Renal Patient and family Advisor Committee is very fortunate to have a Renal Physician, Renal Director, Renal Manager and a Renal Facilitator attend our meetings, as well as patients and other family members. Being part of this committee also means being part of other committees and working groups that are an important part of the Regional Renal Program.

I sit on several committees, but the most important one at this time is the Infection Prevention and Control Committee.

This committee has dealt with COVID-19 since mid-March, trying very hard to keep our Renal patients, and all staff safe; whether it was patients that had to come to the hospital for dialysis 3 times a week or the home patients who dialyzed a home. As the

Patient and Family Advisor voice, I had the opportunity to be part of all the telephone conferences where difficult discussions took place and decisions were made by many staff members. I was always given the opportunity of speak up and offer my opinion at any time during these meetings.

It is great to know that myself, a Patient and Family Advisor, has the opportunity be part of these discussions and the decision-making process at such a life changing and uncertain time. I can honestly say that our Renal Program Staff have worked very hard at keeping everyone safe and I as a Patient and Family Advisor have been included every step of the way.

### KIDNEY FOUNDATION OF CANADA LAUNCHES 50/50 RAFFLE



The Kidney Foundation of Canada launched a 50/50 Draw fundraiser, which opened Wednesday May 6<sup>th</sup>. Tickets will be sold exclusively online @ ten tickets for \$10 or 50 tickets for \$20.00.

The first draw will take place on Wednesday, June 17/20, @ 12:01 pm. The first draw has a guaranteed minimum of \$500.00. The winner receives 50% of the total winnings, and the Foundation receives 50% to allocate to programs and services like our short-term financial assistance program, peer support and research.

The increase in demand on the KF programs and services has come while they are faced with a decrease in funding due in part to the postponement of many of the KF spring events! **That's why the launch of this new initiative is so vital during this time of need!**

Please click on [www.kidney5050.ca](http://www.kidney5050.ca) to purchase your tickets today 😊 Feel free to share with friends/family who might be interested in purchasing tickets!

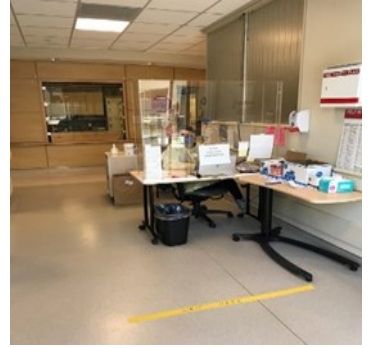
The Kidney Foundation is critical to the care we provide to our patients. Thank you in advance for participating in this fund raiser!

Marlene Rees-Newton  
Board Member, London Chapter



## WHEN YOU ARRIVE FOR DIALYSIS.....

At all of our renal entrances, you will see screeners, similar to this photo. They have been provided a list of standardized screening questions, which they are required to ask before allowing you to enter the dialysis unit. If you answer yes to any of these questions, the screeners will notify the charge nurse and measures will be put in place to bring you into the unit safely.



At Westmount, once passed through screening, you will be directed to follow either the red lines on the floor (failed screen) or the green lines (passed screening). This will lead you to the appropriate waiting area and staff will be informed of the area you are located in.



All of our waiting areas are marked off similar to this photo to allow for appropriate physical distancing measures. Please remember to respect these measures.

## COVID-19 RENAL DIALYSIS TELEPHONE SCREENING

Our renal hemodialysis patients by now have become very familiar with the phone calls from our nurses the day(s) before your next dialysis treatment to screen you for COVID-19 symptoms.



These pre-screening phone calls is an important initiative our nurses do to keep you



safe. The information you provide allows us to plan and support you in advance of your arrival. If you notify our staff of any symptom development in advance we can then advise on: transportation considerations, plan your location when you arrive, any additional testing or screening, and your location for your dialysis treatment. Knowing this information in advance can minimize the time to plan your care. These are uncertain and challenging times for patients, and we hope you understand that these steps are being taken to help keep everyone safe. Thank you for your understanding.

April Mullen, Director, South West Regional Renal Program

## MESSAGE FROM OUR NEPHROLOGISTS

Dear patients and patient families,



As the medical team, we want to thank you for your patience and understanding during this challenging time. The COVID19 epidemic has drastically changed the way we operate. Our community has actually done a wonderful job overall with social distancing, and hand hygiene and as a result we have been able to flatten the curve and have a significant impact on the numbers of new cases. It is imperative that we continue to be very cautious with frequent hand washing, avoiding touching our faces and social distancing as the economy starts to open up. This will help prevent a second wave of infections. Our patients who are on in-Centre hemodialysis are required to come to the hospital three times a week and keeping them safe and healthy is a priority for us. Thankfully through proper screening of our patients and isolation techniques for respiratory illness, we have been able to keep our patients safe. It is so important that we stay vigilant. I believe it is the vigilance of our community that has kept us safer compared to many other countries. I remain very hopeful that we will overcome this epidemic and life will be able to return to a more normal routine.

Dr. Faisal Rehman MD, FRCPC, M.Ed  
Professor of Medicine, Schulich School of Medicine, Western University  
Site Chief Medicine University Hospital, London Health Sciences Centre  
Consultant Nephrologist

## HOW TO COPE WITH THE LONELINESS OF SOCIAL ISOLATION

Some of us with chronic illness are familiar with what it's like to spend long periods of time at home alone. But this pandemic has taken it to a new level for many of you, and loneliness is a familiar feeling right now. It's quite normal to experience stress when faced with staying indoors and interacting with less people, especially when that is added to the underlying stress of worrying whether you will catch the virus. These factors could increase your risk of developing anxiety and low mood as a result. For this reason, taking care of your mental health is particularly important right now.

There are many strategies that might help you maintain your mental health, and they primarily involve either finding ways to distract yourself and keep busy, or finding ways to still be able to connect with others for some social interaction. Distraction can help you avoid long periods of time when you ruminate or think about everything that is wrong and what you're missing. Staying social in non-traditional ways can help you feel less lonely and sad.

Looking for some ideas for how to keep busy (distracted) or interact with people during this time of isolation? Here are some brief suggestions. See if anything jumps out to you as something you can do or try to help protect your mental health.



**Take care of your body:** Try to keep to a regular schedule as much as possible, eat healthy well-balanced meals and get plenty of sleep. As our physical and mental health are delicately intertwined, find at-home activities to be physically active such as going for walks in your neighbourhood or on your treadmill, or following a yoga or low-impact workout on YouTube.

**Connect with others:** Keep connected with friends and family using whatever way is most comfortable for you – a handwritten letter, a phone call, email, social media, or video call. Beyond that, you can also broaden your connections by looking for online groups or forums on topics or hobbies that you are interested in.

**Find sources of comfort:** Relax your body often by doing things that work for you – take deep breaths, stretch, meditate, pray, or try to do activities you know you enjoy such as cooking, baking, focusing on your pet, listening to music, reading, watching your favourite shows/movies. Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade.

**Create something:** Now might be a good time to start a new project or resurrect an old one. Ideas could include writing projects like journaling or writing a poem, art projects like making a photo album, adult colouring or painting-by-numbers, or home projects like picking an area to organize or fix up.

**Plan for the future:** It might help you to focus on the future and what you want to do when this is over. Perhaps making a list of the things you want to do, planning a fun event, making a bucket list or making a “goals” list will help.

**Practice self-compassion:** Remind yourself that accepting the way you feel and recognizing that feelings will come and go is important. Try not to push away those difficult feelings or think you are stupid for feeling them.

If you find yourself with very poor mental health while isolated during coronavirus and aren't able to pull yourself out of feelings of anxiety, depression, or fear, it is important to reach out for help. Consider calling a crisis line like Reach Out (519-433-2023) or an online/telephone therapy service to find out about options. Talk to your medical team and seek out your renal social worker. While it's normal to feel afraid and lonely at a time like this, worsening mental health could indicate the need for outside help.

*Renal Social Workers*



KIDNEY  
KRONICLE

[www.lhsc.on.ca/renal](http://www.lhsc.on.ca/renal)



# GROCERY SHOPPING TIPS:

*Renal dietician group*



Coronavirus (COVID-19) is mainly spread person to person. Avoid crowds at the grocery store and drug store by stocking up on non-perishable foods.

Buy enough to get you through 2-3 weeks. Ask your family, friends, or neighbours if they can do the shopping for you to limit exposure. Your local grocery store may provide delivery services during the pandemic. If you have to go out take precautions to keep 6 feet of space between you and other people. Remember to wash your hands often, especially after outings and when handling food.

Here are some renal-friendly shelf stable items for your pantry that are low in potassium, sodium and phosphorus.

## Fruits:

- Canned or sealed container, no sugar added:  
(drained and rinsed) o Applesauce  
o Fruit Cocktail  
o Peaches  
o Pears  
o Pineapples  
o Mandarin Oranges
  
- Juice: o Cranberry  
o Apple  
o Grape  
o Pineapple
  
- Fruit Punch
- Lemonade
- Limeade

\*Avoid dried fruit, orange juice and other high potassium items\*

## Vegetables:

- Low-sodium or no salt added canned: (drained and rinsed) o Bamboo shoots  
o Beets  
o Carrots  
o Corn  
o Green/Yellow Beans  
o Sweet Peas

\*Avoid canned tomato products, soups and other items high in potassium or sodium\*

## Other:

- Honey
- Jelly
- Jam
- Low-sodium soups and broths (use sparingly due to salt & fluid)
- Water (bottles or jugs)

## Protein:

- Low-sodium canned: (drained and rinsed) o Tuna  
o Salmon  
o Turkey  
o Chicken
- Shelf-stable tofu
- Unsalted peanut butter

## Dairy:

- Dry milk solids
- Shelf stable milk alternatives  
(refrigeration required after opening)
- o Soy
- o Rice: Count it in your fluid restriction.

This is not part of your ½ cup dairy per day.



### Fats:

- Unsalted butter or margarine
- Low-sodium mayonnaise (single packets)
- Vegetable oil
- Olive oil
- Canola oil

### Grain:

- Bread:
  - o White (bannock, roti, chapati, tortilla, naan, buns)
  - o Light rye
  - o Cracked wheat
  - o Sourdough
- Dry Cereal: unsalted, puffed wheat or rice. Avoid bran and high fiber.

Good choices include, but are not limited to:

- o Cornflakes
- o Cheerios
- o Rice Chex
- o Puffed Rice
- o Rice Krispies
- o Special K
- Cooked cereal
  - o Cream of rice
  - o Cream of wheat
  - o Grits
  - o Oatmeal (rolled or steel cut)
- Pasta & couscous
  - o White
  - Rice
    - o White
    - o Basmati
- Unsalted crackers

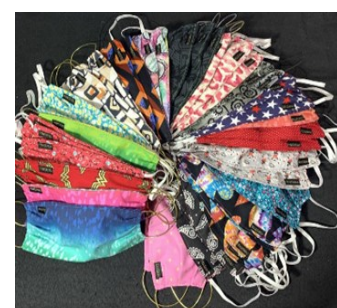
### Sweets:

- Animal crackers
- Chewing gum
- Graham crackers
- Hard candy
- Jellybeans
- Vanilla wafers

**\*\* Important:** If you have any questions or concerns please contact your dietitian. If you are on dialysis and miss a treatment your food intake may need to be adjusted, please call your dietitian for details.

## GET YOUR MASKS!

The LHSC Renal program has approved the use of cloth masks for dialysis patients during their treatment. There was a generous supply donated to LHSC and our Westmount Hemodialysis unit, with enough masks for each dialysis patient to receive 2 masks if they would like. Instruction information on how to properly care and launder the masks was provided. These masks are to be put on upon arrival to the hospital and worn throughout treatment until you leave. There is no need to put a yellow mask on overtop, the cloth mask will be sufficient.



## **Precautions for Patients with Kidney Disease who take ACE Inhibitors, Angiotensin Receptor Blockers (ARBs)**

**ACE inhibitors include:**

Ramipril (Altace)	Cilazapril
Enalapril (Vasotec)	Captopril (Capoten)
Perindopril (Coversyl)	Quinapril
Lisinopril (Prinivil)	Fosinopril
Trandolapril (Mavik)	

**ARBs:**

Losartan (Cozaar, Hyzaar)	Eprosartan
Valsartan (Diovan)	Telmisartan (Micardis)
Candesartan (Atacand)	
Irbesartan (Avapro)	

**Diuretics:**

Furosemide (Lasix)	Spironolactone (Aldactone)
Hydrochlorothiazide	Metolazone (Zaroxolyn)
Indapamide	Amiloride (Midamor, Moduret)
Chlorthalidone (Hygroton)	(Plus a variety of others)

**Diabetes medications:** SGLT-2 inhibitors: canagliflozin (Invokana), empagliflozin (Jardiance), dapagliflozin (Forxiga)  
Metformin

All of the above-named drugs can be useful in patients with kidney disease. Some of them help to protect kidney function in conditions like diabetes, hypertension and glomerulonephritis. Others reduce blood pressure and remove excess fluid. However, all these drugs have the potential to cause problems in patients with kidney disease. This is particularly likely if the patient taking them gets sick with vomiting, diarrhea, nausea, inability to eat and drink, or any other condition that causes dehydration. In these circumstances, the above drugs can actually make kidney function worse and can even cause acute kidney failure and high levels of potassium in the blood. For this reason, it is suggested that, if you are taking one or more of these drugs, and if you get sick with dehydration (vomiting, diarrhea, etc) that you **temporarily** stop taking the drug and only start taking it again when you are clearly better or when you have seen a physician to discuss the issue. On such occasions it may be worthwhile for you to have an urgent blood test to see if the kidney function or the potassium has got acutely worse.

# TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

It is natural to feel stress, anxiety, grief, and worry during and after a pandemic. Everyone reacts differently, and your own feelings will change over time. Notice and accept how you feel. Taking care of yourself, your friends, and your family can help you cope with stress.

Try taking the following steps to cope with the uncertainty, changes, and social distancing measures:



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*\*Brought you by your renal social work team\**

- **Take care of your body**— Try to eat healthy well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep. Avoid alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.
- **Connect with others**— Share your concerns and how you are feeling with a friend or family member. Maintain healthy relationships, and build a strong support system using the phone, email, social media, and video calls.
- **Take breaks**— Relax your body often by doing things that work for you – take deep breaths, stretch, meditate or pray, or try to do activities you usually enjoy. Make time to unwind and remind yourself that strong feelings will fade.
- **Stay informed**— When you feel that you are missing information, you may become more stressed or nervous. Watch, listen to, or read the news for updates from officials. Be aware that there may be rumors during a crisis, especially on social media. Always check your sources and turn to reliable sources of information like your local government authorities.
- **Avoid too much exposure to news**— Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories. It can be upsetting to hear about the crisis and see images repeatedly. Try to do enjoyable activities and return to normal life as much as possible and check for updates between breaks.
- **Maintain a sense of hope and positive thinking** - consider keeping a journal where you write down things you are grateful for or that are going well.
- **Seek help when needed**— If distress impacts activities of your daily life for several days or weeks, talk to a clergy member, counselor, or doctor, or contact the Reach Out helpline at **519-433-2023**.

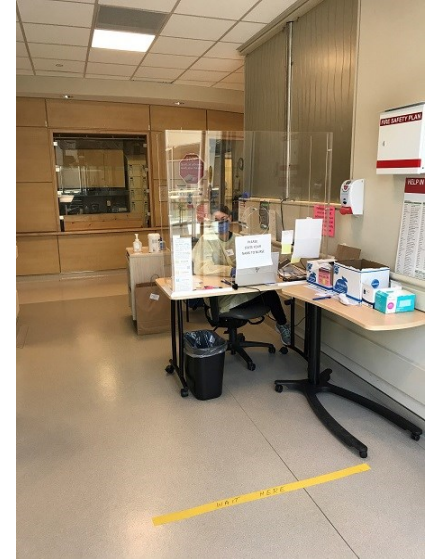


## ARE YOU A RENAL CLINIC PATIENT?? IF YES, THEN YOU WILL WANT TO READ THIS...

Currently, the renal program clinics (General Nephrology, MultiCare Kidney Clinics, PD & HHD) are completing clinic appointments by **Telephone only**, unless the physician or office calls and informs you otherwise.

There are, however, some patients which we understand need urgent care and arrangements will be made by your nephrologist and kidney care team in these circumstances to safely schedule an in-person appointment in your respective clinical area.

Please contact your Nephrologist's office at any time if you are feeling unwell, need to reschedule or have questions about your appointment or care.



We ask that you bring **NO VISITORS** to clinic.



Your telephone appointment may include multiple phone calls from our Renal Allied Health, which includes: Nurse, social worker, dietician, pharmacist Nurse Case Managers and your physician; so be prepared to have your phone handy to receive multiple phone calls on the day of your appointment. Again, we understand this is not an ideal situation, but for your safety and the safety of the health care team, it is currently what is necessary.

For your telephone clinic appointment, some things to have handy include:

- Daily or most recent weights
- Blood Pressure recordings (or a blood pressure from the morning of your appointment)
- Blood Sugar recordings
- Current medication list handy (updated with name, dose and how many times a day you take this medication)
- PD/HHD treatment records/log sheets
- Name of pharmacy where you fill/refill your prescriptions

PD and Home Hemo are still currently training new patients with proper screening in place, physical distancing measures and appropriate PPE in the clinical area.

