

COVID-19: Information for Patients of *BC's Kidney Care Clinics*

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The last several months have brought change and uncertainty for everyone due to COVID-19. This pamphlet provides information on changes made in our Kidney Care Clinics to protect you and our staff. Please feel free to discuss questions with your kidney care team.

1. What will my Kidney Care Clinic visits look like over the next several months?

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, most Kidney Care Clinic visits have been done by telephone. This was to ensure that your kidney care continued but that your exposure to other people was limited. This was important in the beginning stages of the pandemic.

As the number of COVID-19 cases decrease in British Columbia (BC) and we learn more about the virus, we are expanding the ways in which we offer Kidney Care Clinic visits:

a. Virtual visits:

- i. Telephone (same as we have been doing since the start of the pandemic)
- ii. Computer/mobile device (new option)

b. In-person visits (face-to face appointment at the Kidney Care Clinic)

When you have an appointment coming up, your kidney care team will contact you to talk about the most appropriate way for your visit to occur.

2. If I am scheduled for a *virtual visit*, what can I expect?

Before your visit, your kidney care team will contact you tell you what you need to do to prepare. See [Tips for your Virtual Appointment](#)¹ (video by Kidney Foundation of Canada).

Your “visit” may be done:

- At one time: You talk with all members of the kidney care team at the same time; OR
- Over several days: You talk with different members of the kidney care team at different times (which may extend over several days)

Regardless of how your visit is done, your kidney care team will work together with you to make sure you receive the best possible care.

¹ www.youtube.com/watch?v=67beC0dHHvo

3. If I am scheduled for an in-person visit, what can I expect?

Your visit will be similar to in-person visits done before COVID-19. You will be booked to see your nephrologist and other members of the kidney care team, as required. To help make the most of your visit, some members of the kidney care team may contact you a few days before your appointment to gather information.

Before coming to the clinic

Please call your Kidney Care Clinic if:

- You have any of these symptoms:
 - Fever
 - Cough (new onset or worsening chronic cough)
 - Difficulty breathing / shortness of breath
- You have had recent close contact with a family member or friend who has COVID-19

If you have symptoms or have had recent close contact with someone who has COVID-19, you may be:

- Asked questions over the phone by a nurse and given instructions on what to do next
- Asked to postpone your appointment or provided the option of a virtual appointment. This will help us keep everyone safe

Friends/family members attending clinic visits

You may bring one friend/family member to your kidney care clinic visit. Having as few people in the clinic as possible helps keep you, other patients and our staff safe. If you have questions about this, please discuss them with your kidney care team in advance of your visit. Different clinics will have different physical capacities for visitors.

Precautions during clinic visits

- Always clean your hands before and after your clinic visit. Hand sanitizers are available in the patient waiting area
- We suggest you wear a non-medical mask to your visit. This will help prevent the spread of COVID-19 to other patients
- Everyone is asked to practice physical distancing (social distancing) at all times. Where this is not possible (e.g., taking your blood pressure), other safety measures will be put in place (e.g., handwashing, disinfecting the blood pressure cuff after use, etc)
- Staff may wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including face masks, eye protection, gowns and gloves during your visit

4. What will happen with my blood testing schedule?

Your blood testing schedule may have been changed or reduced temporarily to limit your exposure to other people at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the meantime, BC labs have set-up processes to ensure safe collection of blood during this time. Your usual blood testing schedule remains important for your care and safety now, as it was before the pandemic. Your kidney care team will discuss your lab testing with you. If you are not sure what tests to do before your visit, please contact your kidney care team.

When tests are required, book an appointment in advance. Arrive on time, not early for the appointment. If you arrive early, consider waiting in your car until your appointment time.

For information on COVID-19

Phone lines:

- Call 8-1-1 to speak with a nurse with HealthLink BC
- Call 1-888-COVID-19 (1-888-268-4319) or text message at 604-630-0300 for non-medical information about COVID-19 such as information on social distancing

Websites:

- BC Centre for Disease Control at <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>. See the tabs on “Priority Populations, People with Chronic Conditions,” “Testing” and “COVID-19 Vaccine”
- BC Renal: [http://www.bcrenalagency.ca/health-info/prevention-public-health/novel-coronavirus-\(covid-19\)](http://www.bcrenalagency.ca/health-info/prevention-public-health/novel-coronavirus-(covid-19)).
- Kidney Foundation of Canada: <https://kidney.ca/COVID-19-How-to-Protect-Yourself>
- Kidney Foundation of Canada videos: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1xafqJq-rs3J_IRWBSmiBla-Ws_7TxSF (Playlist: We’ve got YOU Covered for COVID)