What is COVID-19?

Coronavirus disease 2019, or "COVID-19," is an infection caused by a specific virus called SARSCoV2. It first appeared in late 2019 in the city of Wuhan, China. People with COVID-19 can have fever, cough, and trouble breathing. Problems with breathing happen when the infection affects the lungs and causes pneumonia.

How is COVID-19 spread?

Experts think COVID-19 first spread to people from animals in China that had the virus. But it can also be spread from person to person, similar to the flu. Currently, there are outbreaks in several different countries.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms usually start a few days after a person is infected with the virus. But in some people it can take even longer for symptoms to appear. They may include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Trouble breathing
- Feeling tired
- Muscle aches

Some people have no symptoms, or only have mild symptoms. But in other people, COVID-19 can lead to serious problems like pneumonia, not getting enough oxygen, or even death. This is more common in people who have other health problems like Chronic Kidney Disease.

Should I see a doctor or nurse?

If you have a fever with cough or trouble breathing and might have been exposed to COVID-19, call your doctor or nurse and let your Dialysis Facility know. You might have been exposed if you have been around a person who has the virus, or if you recently (in the last 14 days) traveled to any of the areas where lots of people have the virus.

Even if your symptoms are not severe, it is best to let your dialysis clinic know before you go in for your scheduled treatment. This way the staff can care for you while taking steps to protect others.

Should I still go to Dialysis if I am sick?

YES! You must continue to have your dialysis treatments to help keep all your body systems functioning correctly. When you report to the dialysis facility, let the dialysis nurse or technician know if you have been exposed to COVID-19, or if you have a fever, cough, difficulty breathing or unusual symptoms and they will take appropriate action and advise you.

How is COVID-19 treated?

Many people with COVID-19 have only mild illness and can rest at home until they get better. If you have more severe illness, you might need to stay in the hospital, possibly in the intensive care unit (also called the "ICU"). There is no specific treatment for the infection, but the doctors and nurses in the hospital can monitor and support your breathing and other body functions, and make you as comfortable as possible.

You might need extra oxygen to help you breathe easily. If you are having a very hard time breathing, you might need to be put on a ventilator. This is a machine to help you breathe.

Can COVID-19 be prevented?

There are things you can do to reduce your chances of getting COVID-19.

Avoid travel to certain countries where there are a lot of cases of COVID-19. You can also protect yourself by washing your hands with soap and water often.

How to properly wash hands to prevent spreading illness

Wet your hands and put soap on them
Rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds. Make sure to clean your wrists, fingernails, and in between your fingers.
Rinse your hands
Dry your hands with a paper towel that you can throw away

If you are not near a sink, you can use a hand gel to clean your hands. The gels with alcohol in them work the best. But it is better to wash with soap and water if you can.

If someone in your home has COVID-19, there are things you can to do protect yourself:
●Keep the sick person away from others – The sick person should stay in a separate room and use a separate bathroom if possible.
●Use face masks – The sick person should wear a face mask when they are in the same room as other people. If you are caring for the sick person, you can also protect yourself by wearing a face mask when you are in the room. This is especially important if the sick person cannot wear a mask.
●Be extra careful around body fluids – If you will be in contact with the sick person's blood, mucus, or other body fluids, wear a disposable face mask, gown, and gloves. If any body fluids touch your skin, wash your hands with soap right away.
●Clean often – It's especially important to clean things that are touched a lot. This includes counters, bedside tables, doorknobs, computers, phones, and bathroom surfaces.
● Wash hands – Wash your hands with soap and water often.
Note: There is not yet a vaccine to prevent COVID-19.

How can I prepare for a possible COVID-19 outbreak?
It is hard to predict where future outbreaks might happen. The best thing you can do to stay healthy is to wash your hands regularly, avoid close contact with people who are sick, and stay home if you are sick.
If there is an outbreak in your area, schools or businesses might close temporarily. If this happens, or if someone in your family gets sick with COVID-19, you might be required to stay at home for a period of time.

HOWEVER, YOU MUST STILL GO TO DIALYSIS FOR YOUR REGULAR TREATMENTS.

If you or others in your family are anxious about COVID-19, keep in mind that most people do not get severely ill or die from it.
As we learn more about this virus, expert recommendations will continue to change. Check with your doctor or public health official to get the most updated information about how to protect yourself.

Let's all do our part to stop the spread of infection!

• **Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.**
• **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.**
• **Avoid close contact with people who are sick with respiratory symptoms.**
• **Stay home when you are sick.**
• **Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.**
• **Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.**