

COVID-19 Steroid Replacement Advice

A number of our patients have been in touch looking for advice relating to the global Coronavirus (also known as COVID-19) outbreak. If you are on steroid replacement therapy for pituitary or adrenal disease, or care for someone who is, and you're worried about Coronavirus, we've pulled together a number of resources that we hope you will find useful.

The World Health Organization has declared the Coronavirus outbreak to be a public health emergency of international concern. In response, the HSE have raised the risk to the public to moderate. If you have been travelling abroad, and you think you may have been exposed to Coronavirus, the most up-to-date advice on what to do can be found on the HSE or government websites. There's information on how to access this advice further down this page.

While the risk of getting Coronavirus in Ireland remains low to moderate, this situation may change. If you have adrenal insufficiency (steroid dependent) and you become unwell for any reason, it's important that you follow sick day rules (see below). The government has said it is working in close collaboration with international colleagues and the World Health Organization to monitor the situation globally.

The government and the HSE are continually updating their advice and information in relation to Coronavirus. These resources the most up-to-date information currently available, so we recommend you check them first if you have any worries or concerns.

Where to get general information:

The most up-to-date information about the outbreak, including information for returning travellers, can be found at the following link. <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus>

Both the HSE and the Department of Foreign Affairs have up-to-date advice on what to do if you've recently returned from travel abroad, symptoms to look out for, and action to take if you become unwell.

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/advice-for-people-returning-from-affected-areas>

<https://www.dfa.ie/travel/travel-advice/coronavirus/>

Specific information for patients with adrenal/pituitary insufficiency:

- Patients on steroid replacement doses are generally not considered to be at higher risk of infection. Therefore, you are at no greater risk of contracting COVID 19.
- All patients who contract COVID 19 should follow the usual follow steroid sick day rules and increase their steroids according to the instructions given by the endocrine clinic. If clinically unwell with viral symptoms, you should double or even triple your daily oral steroid dose until you have recovered. A useful website is <https://www.addisonsdisease.org.uk/newly-diagnosed-sick-day-rules>. If in doubt please contact your endocrine team for advice.
- Patients should make sure they have sufficient additional hydrocortisone supply. It may also be useful to keep a stock of dioralyte or similar, to rehydrate in case of vomiting.
- Patients should make sure the doctors and other health care professionals looking after them are aware that they require an increased dose of steroids or steroids as injection as per sick day rules.
- If you become unwell, in non-emergency situations, anyone seeking information should phone 1850 24 1850 or to use the live chat facility on www.hse.ie. In an emergency, call 999 or 112 immediately.