Having chronic health conditions, or taking immunosuppressive medications can cause a person to be immunocompromised, or have a weakened immune system. Having a weakened immune system may increase your risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Below are some tips to help you navigate through this pandemic.

**Staying safe at home**
To prevent getting sick, make sure you practice everyday preventive actions. Wash hands often, avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth and frequently clean and disinfect surfaces. Preventative actions include:

- **Isolation** – separate sick people from people who are not sick.
- **Quarantine** – separate and restrict the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. These people may have been exposed to a disease and do not know it, or they may have the disease but do not show symptoms.
- **Shopping** – groceries and medications delivered or pick up curbside.
- **Disinfect** – clean frequently touched surfaces with a household disinfectant including door knobs, light switches, toilets, clothes baskets/hampers, faucets and electronics.
- **Laundry** – dirty laundry from a sick person can be washed with other items, but use the warmest washer/dryer settings if possible. Wash and dry items according to the clothing labels. Do not shake dirty laundry and wear disposable gloves while handling dirty laundry.

**Prepare for possible illness**
- Continue any recommended medicines or treatments and follow the advice of your healthcare provider. Do not stop taking your medicines without talking to your healthcare provider.
- Make sure that you have at least a 30-day supply of your medicines.
- Do not delay life-saving treatment or emergency care.
- Call your healthcare provider if you have concerns or feel sick.
Anyone who has had close contact with a person with COVID-19 should stay home and monitor for the following symptoms:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

**Encourage social distancing during socialization**

Only consider activities where social distancing can be maintained.

- Wear a mask.
- Wash hands frequently.
- Visit with your friends and family outdoors, when possible. If this is not possible, make sure the meeting area is well ventilated and large enough to accommodate social distancing.
- Avoid hugging and shaking hands with your visitors. Instead, wave and verbally greet them.
- Arrange tables and chairs to allow for social distancing. People from the same household can be in groups together and do not need to be 6 feet apart from each other.
- Avoid others who are not wearing cloth face coverings or ask others around you to wear cloth face coverings.
Prevent the spread
- Wear cloth face coverings that cover your nose and mouth. Masks may slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others.
- Washing your hands thoroughly. Remember to wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water whenever you think your hands may have become contaminated. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Remember to wash your hands before eating food.
- Limit contact with commonly touched surfaces or shared items.
- Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces and any shared items between use.
- If members of the household have become sick, choose a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

Tips for caregivers
- Wear gloves when you touch or have contact with the sick person’s body fluids. Throw out gloves into a lined trash can and wash hands right away.
- Both patients and caregivers should wear face masks when together.
- Eat in separate rooms if possible.

Tips for pet owners
Until we learn more about how this virus affects animals, treat pets as you would other human family members to protect them from a possible infection. Because there is a small risk that people with COVID-19 could spread the virus to animals, CDC recommends that pet owners limit their pet’s interaction with people outside their household.

For questions, please contact your transplant team by calling 713.441.5451.