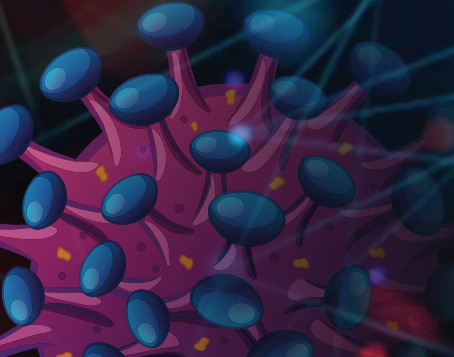


**What do people living
with HIV need to know
about the new Coronavirus
called COVID-19?**



Introduction

A new Coronavirus was discovered in China in late 2019 and it was named SARS-CoV-2. It is a new strain of



Persons living with HIV or AIDS, especially in an emergency, must secure their personalized, prescribed, ARV therapy for several months, as well as any therapy for other diseases, if applicable.



the Coronavirus that has never been detected in humans before. The disease caused by this virus is called COVID-19 (nCoV-2019 or COVID-19) and it mainly affects the lungs and airways. The Coronavirus is spread by droplets that disperse in the air when people cough, sneeze or talk loudly. If you are nearby, you can inhale those drops. Equally, drops can land on surfaces and you may pick them up on your hands. If you touch your face, you could become infected with COVID-19.

COVID-19 is a serious illness and people living with HIV should take all recommended precautions to reduce their exposure to the virus and prevent infection with the new COVID-19 Coronavirus. It is important to point out that there is currently no clear evidence to suggest that people living with HIV are at a particularly increased risk from COVID-19 or, if they have contracted it, that they will have a worse clinical picture or a worse outcome. This applies to people who take their therapy continuously and on a regular basis. Similar to the general non-HIV population, older people living with HIV or living with HIV and having heart or lung problems, diabetes or other chronic illness may be at a higher risk of having more severe symptoms, that is, a more severe clinical picture of the disease.



The purpose of this brochure is for people living with HIV, especially persons with an advanced or poorly controlled AIDS, to receive all currently available information about COVID-19 including recommendations of our physicians (epidemiologists and infectologists) on ways to embrace preventive measures and properly adhere to the SARS-CoV-2 and nCov-2019 infection control guidelines.



Precautionary measures



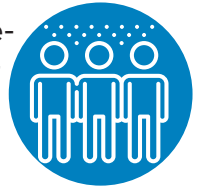
How to Protect Yourself and Others From Coronavirus?

SARS-CoV-2 is a brand new virus that has emerged among humans and is similar to viruses that cause common colds, but also severe airways diseases in the past (the Coronavirus family). The person who manifests the first symptoms of COVID-19 infection is contagious to others just before the onset of symptoms, most when symptoms are manifested. The virus is transmitted by sneezing, coughing as well as direct contact from person to person. Specifically, a person infected with the virus often has virus particles on their hands, cheeks, and the virus particles can persist for even hours on flat, smooth surfaces.



Some people, especially children, have very mild symptoms, that are barely noticeable, such as runny nose, congested nose and nothing more. The most common symptoms in adults are body temperature over 38 ° C, fever, sudden onset of dry cough, scratching in the throat.

Therefore, symptoms vary from those that are barely noticeable, to those that indicate an infection of the airways (temperature and cough), to very severe symptoms in addition to those previously mentioned, such as shortness of breath, and suffocation.




The new Coronavirus is more infectious than initially thought. Life has changed for us, and changes will remain in place until the pandemic is over. That is why it is important to protect ourselves “from the outside” but also from the “inside” – by strengthening our immune system. Panic and stress are known to adversely affect immunity. Stress increases the production of cortisol which reduces immunity, digestion becomes poor, absorption of vitamin C decreases, all of which affect our metabolism and decrease our resistance.



Here are some suggestions on how we can protect ourselves during the nCoV-2019 epidemic:

1. Take your therapy regularly, avoid kissing, hugging, close contact with people, reduce your daily activities to a minimum, work from home if you can.
2. It is necessary to wash your hands with warm water and soap as often as possible, carefully, thoroughly and long enough (at least 20 seconds), and especially after using transportation, lifting, handling money, opening the door, using the toilet... and of course before and after dining. After handling the money, be sure to wash your hands or, if you are unable to wash them, use a hand sanitizer.
3. You should stay at home, avoid any gatherings. Remember that a person can be without symptoms for up to 14 days (incubation period) while spreading the infection.
4. Do not visit friends, relatives, neighbors and do not invite anyone. People without symptoms can also transmit the virus.
5. Have your own cutlery and hygiene items.
6. If you are able to, shop online.
7. Wear surgical masks or masks made of canvas. Please note that moisturizing masks are not effective.
8. The virus enters the mucous membranes of the nose, mouth and eye. When people cough and sneeze, the virus stays on the surface of objects in your environment or in the air. When you touch that surface and then rub your eyes or nose or place your hand on your mouth, you can transmit the virus.
9. You can put on gloves, but it is very important to carefully wash your hands with warm water and soap after removing them.
10. Use disinfectants as directed by the manufacturer, as written for this product. Alcohol (70%) proved to be very effective.



11. Clean your mobile phone with alcohol several times a day, and also the keyboard you work on, as well as remote controls for TVs and other electronic devices.
12. Avoid public toilets.
13. Also, avoid ATMs if you can, but if you use them, put on gloves and wash your hands thoroughly after removing the gloves.
14. Avoid going to health centers and hospitals unless you really badly need to do so.
15. Pay attention to your diet. Anything that can boost your immunity is welcome (Vitamin D, Vitamin C, Zinc Mineral) in prior consultation with your infectologist.¹ Protein deficiency can weaken the immune system.
16. Get warm if it is cold. When it's cold and humid, the virus spreads faster and "lives" longer. Numerous respiratory infections and colds are more common in the winter.
17. Process eggs, meat and other foods well. Wash the green leafy vegetables thoroughly, and keep them briefly in a mild baking soda solution. It is rich in vitamin C and antioxidants and other important phytonutrients.
18. Get hydrated as often as possible. Best with mild lemonade and herbal teas that have beneficial effects (briar, pomegranate, ginger, aronia ...).
19. Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing with the inside of your elbow or a handkerchief.
20. Throw wipes after sneezing, coughing, or wiping your nose IMMEDIATELY in the trash can. Do not dispose of them anywhere else or store them for another use.
21.  Avoid contact with people who have fever or cough.



¹Mineral supplements must not be combined with integrase inhibitors (raltegravir, dolutegravir) at the same time, ie they can be taken with a few hours difference.



What should you do if you experience symptoms of Coronavirus or need medical attention?

1. If you experience any symptoms such as fever, coughing, or difficulty breathing, seek help of a physician or emergency doctor immediately. Before going to your doctor, clinic, hospital or health center, call the hotline and tell them in detail your symptoms, who you have been with and when you have been in contact. Also, answer all questions asked by epidemiologists in detail and honestly, without concealing data and information, because honest and accurate answers will protect yourself and the doctors who need to help you, as well as other people and patients. By providing honest information, you allow healthcare professionals to provide you with the best care, give you the most needed information and advice on what to do next. It is important for the doctors treating you to provide information about the therapy that you are taking!

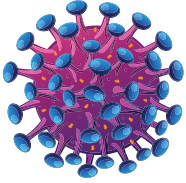


2. If you are ill, wear a mask that is as tight as possible, especially around the nose, under the chin and on the cheeks. You must change the mask as soon as it is moistened or after a maximum of 2 to 3 hours of use, if it is a surgical mask. If it is made of canvas or linen, it should be washed and disinfected as often as possible. Avoid contact with people.



3. If one of the family members becomes ill, he or she must be isolated in a separate room. Close the door of his or her room regularly and open the windows frequently to keep the room ventilated. The patient should be warm, drink plenty of fluids (water, teas) distributed in smaller quantities. Keep him or her isolated from other household members (cutlery, glasses, hygiene accessories, towels, toilet). This will be difficult in small apartments where there is no separate room - then insulation can also be made from plastic lined bath curtains (for bathtubs). Make sure to put all of the infectious waste in double bags.





HIV, TUBERCULOSIS AND COVID-19

Are persons living with HIV particularly susceptible to this infection?

According to data from the European AIDS Clinical Society (EACS) and BHIVA, persons who receive regular treatment are not at a particularly heightened risk of contracting this infection (CD4 over 200 and negative PCR test). However, untreated persons are at a very high risk of getting the most severe forms of the disease. It should also be noted that the severe forms of this disease, which sometimes require artificial ventilation. Elderly persons who have associated diseases are also at risk: coronary diseases, hypertension, angina, diabetes, malignancies, chronic lung diseases; persons who have any other disease associated with HIV infection are only at an increased risk because of the associated disease.



Should persons taking their multi-year long therapy change something?

Persons who have good results and regularly take their therapy have no reason to add or change therapy. If you have read somewhere that the treatment of the most severe patients with COVID-19 involves Aluvia, it does NOT mean that you need to add it to your therapy! This is the same with Preist, Norvir and Resolve! Studies

have been attempted with Aluvia, and patients were given the drug not because of HIV but to see if it was affecting the new virus, but this has proven unsuccessful. Taking Chloroquine, the antimalarial given to the most severe cases of COVID-19 patients, is by no means recommended as a preventative medicine, as it can be extremely harmful, can lead to kidney damage and blindness and it can have an adverse effect on the therapy that you are already taking!



Should you be taking anything else to boost your immunity?

THE MOST IMPORTANT PROTECTION IS THE REGULAR THERAPY, WHICH IS AUTOMATICALLY OR OTHERWISE PROLONGED UNTIL THE EMERGENCY IS COMPLETED!!! Please ensure that any supplements that are not prescribed are compatible with your therapy. This is especially important for preparations with zinc, magnesium, aluminum, aloe, or other herbs that may have unknown effects in combination with your medicines.



Are people who have contracted tuberculosis in the past or who have recently been diagnosed with tuberculosis at higher risk of COVID-19?

If you have been diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB), you are not at higher risk of contracting COVID-19. However, lung damage that can result from tuberculosis can make you more vulnerable to other infections, such as COVID-19.

Although there is currently no information on the impact of pulmonary disease after cured TB on COVID-19, it is likely that individuals who have previously suffered from TB may have a more severe clinical picture from COVID-19. If you are being treated for active tuberculosis, it is important that you take your medication as prescribed. If you have latent TB and are otherwise in good health, you are not likely to be at higher risk of COVID-19 than the general population.



You have been diagnosed with active tuberculosis. How do you know if you have COVID-19?

If you have been diagnosed with TB, you may already experience different symptoms. This is most likely due to your illness or the side effects of the medication you are taking. However, they can be caused by other diseases or conditions, including COVID-19. That is why it is important to remember any symptoms that have occurred and to inform your doctor or nurse, especially if the symptoms get worse.

Make sure to talk to the doctor in charge of your TB treatment if you experience new symptoms that could be related to COVID-19 (cough, fever, shortness of breath), or if your condition is worsening in any way.

What to do if you develop COVID-19 during TB treatment?

If you contract COVID-19, make sure to tell your doctor or nurse responsible for your TB treatment. Keep in regular contact with them and inform them of any symptoms or changes in your condition.

It is important that you do not stop taking all TB medicines as prescribed. Tell your doctor or nurse responsible for TB treatment if you need support.

Most important messages for persons living with HIV

- **TAKE YOUR THERAPY ON A REGULAR BASIS**
- **DO NOT SELF-MEDICATE AND TAKE ONLY WHAT YOUR DOCTOR PRESCRIBED FOR YOU**
- **SAME PROTECTION MEASURES APPLY AS FOR THE GENERAL POPULATION**
- **PAY ATTENTION TO ANY RISK FACTORS YOU MIGHT HAVE AND CONTACT THE INFECTIOLOGY CLINIC ON TIME**

Les recommandations générales

- Get information only from reliable sources of information.
- Always keep the necessary medication at home to cover you for at least a month or more (electronic prescription is automatically extended in Serbia until the end of the state of emergency) - this also applies to ARV therapy (<http://unijaphiv.rs/uvod-u-arv-terapiju/>).



- Find out the hotline numbers for Coronavirus in case that you need medical advice.
- Learn how to access treatment and get the help you need.
- Key populations, including people using psychoactive substance, sex workers, men who have sex with men, intersex and transgender individuals and prisoners, should secure the necessary resources to prevent HIV infection, such as sterile needles and syringes, condoms and, if possible, PrEP (pre-exposure prophylaxis, or protection with antiretroviral drugs used before a risky sexual intercourse). Procurement of adequate supplies of other medicines such as contraceptive pills or hormone therapy is also recommended.
- Talk to your family and friends about ways in which you can help each other in times when physical distance is necessary. Make a plan for provision of food, medicine, and care for your children and pets.

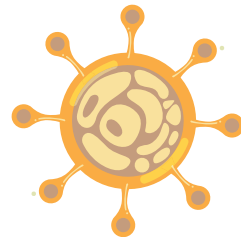


- Stay in touch with your Peer Counsellors from your citizens' association who provide assistance and support to people living with HIV and AIDS (<http://unijaphiv.rs/clanice/> and <http://unijaphiv.rs/dpst-savetovanje-i-testiranje/>), as well as with other people in your area who live with HIV by phone and through social media.
- COVID-19 pandemic can trigger fear and anxiety, and it is important to take care of yourself and keep in touch with your loved ones. People living with HIV and their communities have decades of experience in resilience, survival and advancement, and can use their rich shared history to support their families and communities in the current crisis.



- Pay attention to your mental health by following these tips:
 - Reduce exposure to media coverage on COVID-19 if it causes anxiety and tension. Media messages are not always created with care for the mental health of citizens. Only watch and listen to trusted sources of information and people you trust because such information can help reduce your fear.
 - Focus on other activities you enjoy and fill your day with them. Try doing what you've never had time for, and that you enjoy. Go back to old hobbies. Do simple tasks and activities: cook, clean, sing, paint, read...
 - Take care of your body: breathe deeply and exercise regularly, do stretching exercises, meditate, try to eat healthy food and have balanced meals, get enough sleep and avoid alcohol and psychoactive substances.
 - Stay in touch with family and friends over the phone and social networks and share with them your concerns and how you feel. Now is the time to talk to those people you haven't been in contact with for a long time.
 - It is normal for you to feel fearful and tense. Talking to friends and family can help. If you feel you need to talk to a psychotherapist, visit www.savezpsihoterapeuta.org/korona-virus/ to find a list of psychotherapists who offer free psychotherapy for the duration of the epidemic.
- Know your rights and stop stigma and discrimination if they arise. You can find more information about your rights and how to recognize discrimination on the websites of the Commissioner for Equality Protection (www.ravnopravnost.gov.rs) and the Commissioner for Information of Public Importance and Protection of Personal Data (www.poverenik.rs), and you can get advice, support and assistance directly from USOP's network of Peer Counsellors (<http://unijaphiv.rs/kontakti/>) or at one of the civil society organizations dealing with these issues in Serbia (<http://unijaphiv.rs/clanice/>).





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