



Florida Department of Health

Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention
Division of Community Health Promotion

Chronic Diseases & COVID-19 Toolkit for Healthcare Providers

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Dear Partner,

While seemingly every day brings new research, findings and recommendations regarding COVID-19, we already know some key medical indicators have been apparent since the early days of the pandemic. One is that people with certain pre-existing health conditions, like chronic diseases, appear to be at higher risk of severe illness related to COVID-19.

As you know, unfortunately many of these same people were also adversely impacted by interruptions in care and the challenges that arose during the early stages of the pandemic.

As community leaders and those involved with providing access to care, your role in supporting people living with these chronic conditions is more important than ever. Amid a sea of misinformation and rumors coming from less reputable sources, it's critical that we remain attuned to the latest **accurate** and **research-driven** tools and information to best support these communities.

In this brief toolkit you will find links to the latest reliable updates on those with chronic conditions, quick tips you can share with the community, and links to online resources if you're interested in learning about more ways you can help.

Thank you for staying informed and involved in this challenging time. Together we can help people in need through this challenging time.

Sincerely,

Florida Department of Health, Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has built and regularly maintains a list of underlying chronic conditions that elevate the risk of severe illness from COVID-19. The CDC distinguishes between those chronic conditions where people are at higher risk and those chronic conditions where people **might be** at increased risk. The distinction is made based on how conclusive the evidence is.

As of September 29, 2020, the CDC indicates people of any age with any of the following conditions **are** at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19:

- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD
- Immunocompromised state from solid organ transplant
- Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher)
- Serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- Sickle cell disease
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus

Additionally, the CDC indicates several pre-existing conditions might put an individual at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19. These conditions include:

- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Cerebrovascular disease
- Cystic fibrosis
- Hypertension or high blood pressure
- Immunocompromised state from blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, or use of other immune weakening medicines
- Neurologic conditions, such as dementia
- Liver disease
- Pregnancy
- Pulmonary fibrosis
- Smoking
- Thalassemia
- Type 1 diabetes mellitus



As research continues, updates will appear [on the CDC's page dedicated to COVID-19 and chronic health conditions.](#)

The Florida Department of Health maintains [a webpage containing information specifically for people in high-risk populations.](#) It includes frequently asked questions, travel information, basic tips and details on other groups at risk besides those with specific medical conditions (such as the elderly.)

For information regarding data specific to Florida and information directly from the Florida Department of Health, please visit the official [main page for COVID-19 information.](#)



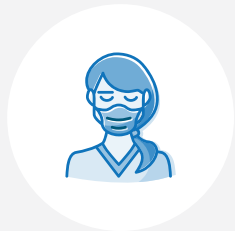
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

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The Florida Department of Health has been sharing several tips for people living with chronic conditions including those indicated by the CDC. Please consider sharing these tips with your patients.

COVID-19 PREVENTION TIPS



Wear a face covering *correctly* whenever around others in close conditions.



Social distance. Keep at least 6 feet away from others whenever possible.



Wash your hands regularly, with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds.

TIPS FOR PATIENTS WITH CHRONIC CONDITIONS

- Get a **flu shot**.
- If people in your home are in public and in contact with others, ask them to wear face coverings whenever in close proximity to you and to regularly clean any common surfaces (doorknobs, countertops, etc.)
- **Continue seeing your doctor** or healthcare provider for regular treatment.
- If access becomes an issue, **ask your healthcare provider about options including telehealth**.
- **Take your medication** as prescribed.
- **Stay active** and get exercise as indicated.