Are you living with a rheumatic disorder like lupus, Sjogren’s syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, among others? Hamad Medical Corporation has advised that for your safety, you should not visit the clinic if you have an appointment as a precautionary measure to curb the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The doctor will call you and will also get your medication delivered at your doorstep. **PAGE 3**

**How Ambulance Service team protects themselves from COVID-19**

Hamad Medical Corporation’s Ambulance Service paramedics and team members have been on the frontline to fight the coronavirus disease. But have you ever wondered how they keep safe to prevent themselves from contracting the disease? **PAGE 7**

---

**TWO FIELD HOSPITALS OPEN**

Qatar opened two field hospitals as part of efforts to provide medical services throughout the country.

An interior view of Libsear Field Hospital in Al Shahaniya (Dukhan Road).

Field hospital in Industrial Area.

---

**Catherine W Gichuki**

Doha

In the efforts to fight the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), Qatar recently opened two field hospitals within a week.

One of the hospitals, a 200-bed facility, is located in Industrial Area while the other, a 504-bed facility, was opened in Al Shahaniya in association with the Ministry of Public Health and Ministry of Defence.

It is because of such efforts that despite many cases being reported, the mortality rate remains very low in Qatar. It is worth to note that Qatar is among the two nations standing out with the lowest fatality rates among countries experiencing major outbreaks. In Qatar and Singapore, the death toll is less than 0.1 percent of reported infections.

National Lead for Health Care Sector in the lockdown area Dr Khalid Abdulnoor Safeldeen, who is also the Director of Hamad Medical Corporation’s Hamad International Training Centre (HITC), said the facility in Industrial Area can receive between 2,000 to 3,000 patients a day.

The facility is not only for coronavirus patients but other ailments and emergencies as well. The field hospital was put up in four weeks.

“During COVID-19, the whole system has changed even for people outside the lockdown areas because some hospitals have been turned into facilities to care for COVID-19, so capacity and access to care has changed. We felt very quickly that we needed to provide them with alternative access to normal care.”

---

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2
According to him, the field hospital has medication refill system, outpatient clinic, emergency department, observation but can’t provide critical care or major trauma which can go to other hospitals. “

According to him the entire HITC staff is volunteering at the facility.

The facility also features adjoining quarantine facility which can accommodate 300-400 people for two to four weeks.

The hospital has 200 staff including doctors and nurses and also an ambulance station.

For the Libsear Field Hospital, the Clinical Lead of the hospital Dr Abdulla Rashid al Naimi said that the facility was for those who were recovering from COVID-19. “The facility has buildings including the administration, then there are two main buildings (A and B) which has 252 beds each. Each room has its own toilet. It’s a complete private room.’

According to Dr Al Naimi, the hospital is for those who have recovered from the dedicated COVID-19 hospitals including Hazm Mebaireek General Hospital (HGMH), Mesaeeid, Ras Laffan and Cuban Hospital. “Cuban Hospital takes women and children while the other three takes the majority of the patients. “We want the flow in these hospitals to be continuous.”

Dr Al Naimi said that the hospital was set up in two-and-a-half weeks.

The hospital has over 70 medical staff including 20 doctors. “All the patients are receiving the mental health support on a regular basis with a special volunteer team of doctors, “ said Dr Al Naimi.
Are you living with a rheumatic disease? This is for you

"Those with rheumatic disorders should not stop or change their medication as medications are important to control the disease and protect the patient’s health"

Catherine W Gichuki
Doha

Are you living with a rheumatic disorder like lupus, Sjogren’s syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, among others? Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) has advised that for your safety, you should not visit the clinic if you have an appointment as a precautionary measure to curb the spread of corona virus disease (COVID-19).

The doctor will call you and will also get your medication delivered at your doorstep. HMC Head of Rheumatology Division in Medicine Department Dr Samar al Emadi said that patients should not go to the clinic during their appointments. “Your doctor will call you to check on you and will discuss with you any health problems related to your disease, will update you regarding your results and will give you the proper advice. If your situation requires you to come to the clinic, you will be asked to.”

She reiterated that the clinics are still working at full staff capacity including physicians and nurses and that they were calling their patients daily and reviewing their files and their blood results. “We are avoiding bringing patients to the clinics for their own benefit.”

According to Dr Al Emadi patients should also not worry about their medications for their doctor will order the medication and the patient can collect the medicines at the pharmacy or delivered at home through the home delivery service via Qatar Post.

Dr Emadi said that those with rheumatic disorders should not stop or change their medications because medications are important to control the disease and protect the patient’s health. “According to American College of Rheumatology and European League against rheumatological disease, a patient should not stop or change doses of these medications including biological medications unless there are symptoms like fever or cough or any symptoms suggesting the presence of an infection.”

She reiterated that if one has fever or cough the medications should be stopped in agreement with a rheumatologist except for hydroxychloroquine (plaquinil) as it is safe.

According to Dr Al Emadi patients with rheumatic disorders, just like others, should observe the precautionary measures to protect themselves from COVID-19 such as maintaining personal and hand hygiene; avoiding touching eyes and face especially when outside the house; avoiding going out unnecessary; avoid going close to sick people; exercising; maintaining a healthy diet, besides others.

She advised that if one gets cough or fever they should follow the Ministry of Public Health recommendations by calling the hotline-16000.

Take extra precautions if you live with a cardiovascular condition

Catherine W Gichuki
Doha

People with heart conditions are vulnerable to respiratory infections and are at an increased risk when it comes to recovering from coronavirus disease (COVID-19), just like others with underlying medical conditions. Therefore, it is important for those with cardiovascular issues to take extra precautions to protect themselves from contracting the disease.

Hamad Medical Corporation’s (HMC) Heart Hospital Senior Consultant Cardiologist Dr Omar al Tamimi said that although they don’t believe these patients are at a higher risk of getting the coronavirus, they know that those who get it have a higher chance to suffer complications, just as they would with the seasonal flu.

“People with cardiovascular disease have chances of catching the covid-19 just like any other people. The difference is that symptoms of those with cardiovascular disease are going to be much more severe.”

He added that according to some reports, it was reported that coronavirus disease attacks people with comorbidities like heart disease, kidney and chest problems. “For that reason we need to have more efforts to prevent ourselves from catching COVID-19.”

According to him the general precautionary measures they need to follow are social distancing, frequent washing of hands, wearing masks, and trying to avoid contacts with suspicious people especially those who have symptoms.

“It is important for those patients to pay a lot of attention in taking their medication because they need to keep their condition in check.”

However, in case they need to consult their doctor they can call the hotline 16000. If it is during their appointment time, a doctor will call them on their phone.

Dr Omar al Tamimi, Hamad Medical Corporation’s Heart Hospital Senior Consultant Cardiologist.
COVID-19 COMMON SYMPTOMS: CAN INCLUDE:

- Fever
- Cough (usually dry)
- Shortness of breath

COVID-19 MODE OF TRANSMISSION:
The virus seems to be transmitted mainly via respiratory droplets that people sneeze, cough, or exhale. The virus can also survive for several hours on surfaces such as tables and door handles.

Employers must rapidly take the following precautionary measures to flatten the coronavirus COVID-19 curve and prevent the current pandemic from worsening and affect our community especially our vulnerable population.

Employers must ensure that they follow national and WHO recommendations in order to keep workplace safe and healthy in the presence of the Coronavirus COVID-19.

**ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANING**

Employers MUST have installed hand sanitizers containing alcohol (ethanol or ethyl alcohol 60% minimum), isopropyl alcohol or benzalkonium chloride and ensure they are refilled regularly.

Employers MUST also provide soap, water and tissues in all available restrooms.

**TIMEKEEPING**

Employer MUST suspend the use of fingerprints for work timekeeping until further notice. Line Managers MUST be able to monitor their staff attendance manually, if necessary, until the situation is controlled.

**STAFF TEMPERATURE**

Employers can measure the staff temperature using a touchless device one or two times a day all by respecting physical distancing.

**EXTERNAL VISITORS AND MEETINGS**

Employers MUST cancel external visits and external business meetings. Technology is highly developed to provide solutions like Business Skype, Microsoft Teams, Virtual Meetings applications.

**FOOD & BEVERAGES**

Employers should suspend temporarily the use of an external company to serve tea and coffee.

Employers should notify staff that all personal deliveries to the office are also suspended and that employees should self-serve themselves and bring their personal food and preferably disposable items (spoon, mug, glass, plate, etc).

**MENTAL HEALTH & STRESS MANAGEMENT**

Employers MUST share the facts about COVID-19 with all employees and regularly communicate through emails or social media. Providing the comfort in understanding employees’ fear and support with continuous internal communication on status as well as understanding that actual risk, can make an outbreak less stressful.

**WORK FLEXIBILITY**

When Employers share accurate information about COVID-19 they can help make employees feel less stressed and allow them to connect with their managers if they feel the need to.

It is the Employers responsibility to take necessary measures to ensure employees feel free to talk should they have any symptoms, with no fear of being discriminated against at the workplace.

Employers at times of extremely high health risk MUST be flexible and enable people to work from home when tasks and functions allow that.

Employers, as a minimum, MUST follow National Directives and implement immediately the following: People suffering from chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension, people above 55 years and pregnant women MUST work remotely from home.

What should an employer do if one of his/her employee is infected?

Employers must provide the employee a surgical mask that he will wear appropriately and put the employee in an isolated area or room before calling the MOPH hotline 16000.

When an employer, as a minimum, MUST follow National Directives and implement immediately the following: People suffering from chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension, people above 55 years and pregnant women MUST work remotely from home.

**WORK FLEXIBILITY**

Employers MUST follow the Ministry of Public Health National Infection Prevention and Control Interim Guideline for Corona Virus COVID-19 and housekeeping staff shall use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment.

Employers MUST communicate with the patient coworkers especially those at risks for them to take any necessary measures and precaution without introducing stigma and discrimination in the workplace.

Employers MUST make sure the patient has a medical clearance before returning to work.

For more info. on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) visit www.moph.gov.qa or call 16000
COVID-19 - a Guide for Family and Carers of Older People

Older adults, aged 65 years and older, are at a higher risk of contracting Coronavirus Disease and can become more ill. At this time, there are no specific vaccines or treatments for the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), so the best way to keep your loved ones safe from infection is to keep them away from contact with the virus.

This is for family and carers of older people, to help them reduce the risk of their loved one contracting the disease as well as to help caregivers themselves.

What is your role as family member and/or caregiver?

Some older adults will make changes to their routines and adapting to the new COVID-19 reality. Remember that these are extraordinary times, the uncertainty along with home confinement and isolation from friends and family can be stressful if not overwhelming.

The best way to prevent and slow down transmission of the disease is to be well-informed about the COVID-19 virus, its symptoms and how it spreads. Protect yourself and others from infection by avoiding hand shaking and maintaining a safe distance comes into contact with your family and especially your elderly relative.

You can use the safety guidelines for the older person in your care by establishing practical infection prevention and control measures, including:

1. Washing Hands
   - Encourage frequent handwashing with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
   - After any type of contact with someone who is ill or any surfaces they may have touched.
   - Before, during and after preparing food.
   - Before and after eating.
   - After using the toilet.
   - Immediately following touching surfaces by the person who has COVID-19 and clean and disinfect them daily.
   - Where a medical trust advises the same room with the person who has COVID-19. We wash hands thoroughly for more than 20 seconds and disinfect.
   - Use dedicated chopsticks, eating utensils, towels and handkerchiefs for the person who has COVID-19. Wash them with soap and water.

2. Practicing Physical Distancing
   - It can be hard to live alone while, especially on stressful occasions and in the event of COVID-19, staying at home or simply limiting your interactions is crucial.
   - While it is important to keep a safe distance with friends and family, it is also important to continue looking after your loved ones.
   - Make sure your elderly relative is following advised safety protocols when coming to the house.

3. Do:
   - Eat regular healthy meals, with lots of fresh fruit and vegetables, to help boost your body’s natural immune system.
   - Drink plenty of liquids, preferably water.
   - Take medications as prescribed, think they have taken their daily medication.
   - Keep as physically fit as you can, within the confines of your home and subject to your health condition. Some form of daily exercise helps improve blood circulation and lung function.
   - Keep your mind active, with reading, using the internet to learn a new skill or play games and staying in touch with friends and family through the telephone or social media.
   - Loneliness and boredom in older people can lead to depression and early death.
   - The internet can be a wonderful tool for learning new skills. If the older person in your care is not already familiar with it, you can help them to learn how to use new software.
   - The Ministry of Public Health in Qatar has established a dedicated website (www.moph.gov.qa) to provide the public with updates on the current situation as well as information on how to protect themselves and others from COVID-19.
   - REMEMBER IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT FOR PRIMARY CAREGIVERS TO LOOK AFTER THEIR OWN HEALTH.
   - Camping can be your time to reset and re-energize.
   - You are not alone - do not be afraid to ask for help.

4. TIPS FOR HOW YOU CAN HELP EASE THE IMPACT OF PHYSICAL DISTANCING
   - Limit the non-essentials: Encourage the older adults in your life to cancel any appointments and outings that are not essential. It is essential, contact a healthcare provider as the COVID-19 hotline (16000) and ask for advice.
   - Limit travel: If you travel at all, talk to your older adult about what matters to you and add them to your list of daily interaction needs.
   - Ask older adults to wash their hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
   - Make sure they understand that washing their hands is a vital step in preventing illness.
   - Help older adults to understand that it is best to keep a safe distance and to avoid close contact (within 1 meter).

5. Offer help:
   - If you have an elderly relative who is in contact with them as a family member or a neighbor, ask how you can help them - whether it is a medication refill, or they need groceries; let them know you care and are there to help them.
   - Respect their autonomy and self-help but also ensure they are aware of why you are doing certain things to keep them safe.
   - Communicate: Do not be too negative but try to communicate effectively and calmly. We all feel the times like these, as remember to pass it on to the older adults in your life. This is a stressful time, more now than ever, it is good to be patient and practice peaceful unity.

What general advice should you give to your elderly relative or care recipient?

Everyone ages differently; while some might be more homebound due to their existing health condition, others might be active and used to leading an independent and energetic life.

Do Not:
   - Risk any crowded places - Let someone else do the food shopping or visit the chemist if needed.
   - Attend any social gatherings - Birthdays, weddings and any other special occasions outside the house as well as inside the home.
   - Have physical contact with anyone who is sick - even if they may only have a simple cold, they may also be carrying the coronavirus.

What should you do if you suspect a potential infection in the older person in your care?

Common signs of COVID-19 include fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing. As the virus becomes more severe, the infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.

If your elderly relative experiences any of these symptoms, they are running low, you can arrange for a repeat prescription by calling the COVID-19 hotline on #16000.

What should you do if you suspect you may have some kind of infection?

If you or anyone else in your family or household, who has been in contact with your elderly relative, exhibit any signs of having flu-like symptoms you should call the COVID-19 hotline for advice on how to proceed further.

Make sure you keep your distance from your loved ones and adopt extra special hand hygiene until you are sure you do not carry the virus and can transfer it to others.

What do you need to know about physical distancing and how can you introduce this at home to keep your loved one safe?

Physical distancing means avoiding others to prevent the virus from spreading. It can also mean keeping your distance from others as this can help to protect yourself if you are sick. It can be a big challenge in reducing our risk of becoming infected and of spreading others, including the older person in your care. Here are some tips to help keep the older person safe:

• Wear a medical mask when in the same room with the person who has COVID-19.
• Avoid touching the person who has COVID-19.
• Do not touch the same surfaces as the person who has COVID-19 as long as you do not share the same surfaces.
• Use dedicated chopsticks, eating utensils, towels and handkerchiefs for the person who has COVID-19. Wash them with soap and water.

For more info. on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) visit www.moph.gov.qa or call 16000
How to observe dental care during COVID-19

HEALTH CHECK TEAM

A part of the precautionary measure and following the directive of the Ministry of Public Health to limit the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) Dental Services restricted in-person patient’s appointments to health centers.

To be seen at the health centre, one must have one or more of these conditions including severe toothache pain (not just a little pain), infection or a substantial risk of it and trauma (such as a broken tooth).

However, if you feel sick before coming to see a dentist, for instance, if you have a fever, cough, shortness of breath and a sore throat - you must call the COVID-19 hotline #16000 first for advice on how to proceed.

Patients requiring PHCC dental services can now dial 16000 and choose the PHCC option, they will then be routed to a PHCC Community Call Centre offering remote consultations for patients requiring both routine and urgent care dental services.

TIPS ON DENTAL HYGIENE

- The best way to reduce your need to see a dentist is to keep good oral hygiene.
- Brush your teeth twice a day with toothpaste that contains fluoride
- Gargle frequently with an antiseptic mouthwash or simply rinse your mouth with salt water, which is a natural and cost effective way to keep your mouth clean.

Treating skin irritations from wearing face masks

MAYO CLINIC
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Since people are wearing face masks because of COVID-19 pandemic requirements, skin irritations on the face might be more prevalent.

“People are getting friction and irritation across their nasal bridge, behind their ears and perhaps under their chin,” says Dr. Dawn Davis, a Mayo Clinic dermatologist. “That happens because of natural wear but also because the masks are tight, which is well-intentioned, but can strangle the skin.”

She says the mask should not be loose and should be worn firmly against the skin, but not so tight it bruises the skin.

Dr. Davis also recommends using zinc oxide. “That’s the white hypoallergenic chemical that’s in unscented diaper paste,” she says. “It has very nice anti-inflammatory properties, and you can put a thin layer across your nasal bridge, behind your ears or under your chin, in places where the mask will rub.”

She says that serves as a barrier to the friction without affecting or decreasing the effectiveness of the mask.

Dr. Davis says the first step for mask use and sensitive skin is after you’ve washed and patted your face dry, apply hypoallergenic moisturizer that’s identified as face moisturizer. Apply the lotion or cream twice, leaving a thick layer.

“Then do a vinegar soak with a washcloth and lay it across your face for about 15 minutes in the areas that are irritated,” says Dr. Davis. Her recipe for the vinegar soak is to put a teaspoon of white vinegar in a glass or small bowl of warm water, soak a clean washcloth, then rest it on your face.

“Repeat that two to three times a day, if possible, and you’ll find that this humidifying method is very helpful,” she says.

Also, skin issues on the face and neck that are not related to COVID-19, where the mask rests or rubs, are likely to be exacerbated by the friction of the mask and sweating, since some people get warm wearing them. Examples include acne, rosacea and psoriasis.

For these concerns, Dr. Davis encourages people to:
- Wash the face gently with soap and water, twice daily.
- Use medications as directed.
- Consult your dermatologist or primary health care provider if a new rash erupts, or if the current skin condition changes appearance or is not responding to treatment.

Dr. Davis also stresses washing cotton face masks to keep them clean. She says washing by hand is gentler on the mask. However, remember to wash adequately with soap and hot water.

Dr. Davis offers other reminders, including:
- Replace ties or elastic, as needed, if you wear.
- Replace the mask if it tears or develops holes.
- Wear the mask over the nose and mouth. Not just the mouth.
- Don’t forget about potential irritation behind the ears and under the chin.
How Ambulance Service team protects themselves from COVID-19

The Ambulance Service including the paramedics and the team are well protected and they follow HMC’s Infection and Control Disease and WHO’s guidelines and protocols.

Catherine W Gichuki

H.

AMAD Medical Corporation’s (HMC) Ambulance Service paramedics and team members have been on the front line to fight the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). But have you ever wondered how they keep safe to prevent themselves from contracting the disease?

Ambulance Service Assistant Executive Director Ali Darwish said COVID-19 has a lot of scheduled transfers either from community to hospital, from hospital to hospital or from quarantine to hospital.

In addition the Ambulance Service is also supporting quarantine with a supervisor to assist with the management of quarantine and the needs of people who are inside. “We also support them with the ambulances for transfer from quarantine to hospital if the patient is sick or if they their health deteriorates. The Ambulance Service also provides the Field Hospital in Industrial Area with ambulances to assist in transferring patients from the field hospital to Hamad General Hospital or to any other emergency care centre.”

Darwish explained that the Ambulance Service has another team and they work together in the fight against the pandemic—the Mobile Health Services (MHS).

“MHS continues to operate normal community service, for example, IV antibiotics, dressings at home; long-term care for housebound elderly patients and services at our fixed facilities, at the Patient Recovery Centre (97-bedded step down facility) and the Hamad International Airport (HIA) North-Node Clinic.”

According to Darwish, the MHS recently supported the Ministry of Public Health in Community Survey by providing the operational capacity for the drive-through swabbing of over 1,300 individuals. “MHS is also doing Ports of Entry screening/swabbing at HIA / Doha Port; and follow-up by telephone and home visits – medical advice as required and swabbing to support discharge after 14 days. About a month ago, we held a large drive-through service over a few days to support the swabbing of large numbers (1,200) of home quarantine individuals.”

With all this to do, how do they keep themselves protected?

According to Darwish the Ambulance Service including the paramedics and the team are well protected and they follow HMC’s Infection and Control Disease and WHO’s guidelines and protocols.

Describing the type of the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) they use as Ambulance Service, Darwish said first they get to know what they are facing before they arrive which is given from the National Command Center.

“The National Command Center gives us the information about the information of the patient that we are going to and then we wear the PPE.”

According to him, when donning the PPE, they start with the face mask, face shield, gloves, gown/apron (worn on top of the uniform), head cover and foot cover. “We also provide the patient who is COVID-19 positive a mask and gloves, for the patient not to transmit the disease.”

He said besides that the Ambulance Service also screens and swabs its staff. “We protect and monitor our staff by regular swabbing and screening especially the group of staff who are regularly in direct contact of dispatching COVID-19 positive patients and transferring them either from community to hospital or from hospital to hospital (inter-facility transfer).

The official further said that they also monitor the health condition of their staff and if they notice any sign and symptom, the paramedic is transferred to the HMC’s staff clinic where they continue with the procedure and investigations required.

According to him, even at home they lead a lifestyle that will minimise them or their family members getting infected. “The Ambulance Service paramedics are naturally careful because they are healthcare providers and this is part of their training and educational practice. This means that during the pandemic, they are even more careful and cautious to a level that when they go home after work, they put their belongings and footwear, uniform outside the house and they go directly to take a good shower.”

According to Darwish, they change their clothes and disinfect every belonging they had from work including phones, wallet, among others. He said that when they enter the house, they don’t use the house facility—they don’t sit on chairs and don’t get in touch with their families and kids before they take bath and disinfect themselves. “They also keep a family social distance. These are the precautions they follow to minimise the chances of getting infected.”
Wash your hands regularly with soap and water or use a hand sanitizer

Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze, and dispose of used tissues

Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness

If you experience symptoms including cough, sneezing, and fever, limit your contact with other people

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with your hands

داوم على عصي يديك بالباء والمصابين

احرص على تشطيب الهم والأذان عند العطس

تحني المراقبة عن أي شخص يعاني

في حال أصابك أي أعراض بيرميان مثل السعال والهضم والعطس وحتى المصابين على الحد من مبادلة الخلايا أ-descendants

لمزيد من المعلومات يرجى زيارة الموقع الالكتروني www.moph.gov.qa أو الاتصال على رقم الهاتف (16000)