

## **AACE Position Statement: Coronavirus (COVID-19) and People with Adrenal Insufficiency and Cushing's Syndrome**

### **Source:**

<https://www.aace.com/recent-news-and-updates/aace-position-statement-coronavirus-covid-19-and-people-adrenal>

With the novel COVID-19 virus continuing to spread, it is crucial to adhere to the advice from experts and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help reduce risk of infection for individuals and the population at large. This is particularly important for people with adrenal insufficiency and people with uncontrolled Cushing's Syndrome.

Studies have reported that individuals with adrenal insufficiency have an increased rate of respiratory infection-related deaths, possibly due to impaired immune function. As such, people with adrenal insufficiency should observe the following recommendations:

- Maintain social distancing to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19
- Continue taking medications as prescribed
- Ensure appropriate supplies for oral and injectable steroids at home, ideally a 90-day preparation
  - In the case of hydrocortisone shortages, ask your pharmacist and physician about replacement with different strengths of hydrocortisone tablets that might be available. Hydrocortisone (or brand name Cortef) tablets have 5 mg, 10 mg or 20 mg strength
- In cases of acute illness, increase the hydrocortisone dose per instructions and call the physician's office for more details
  - Follow sick day rules for increasing oral glucocorticoids or injectables per your physician's recommendations
    - In general, patients should double their usual glucocorticoid dose in times of acute illness
    - In case of inability to take oral glucocorticoids, contact your physician for alternative medicines and regimens
- If experiencing fever, cough, shortness of breath or other symptoms, call both the COVID-19 hotline (check your state government website for contact information) and your primary care physician or endocrinologist
- Monitor symptoms and contact your physician immediately following signs of illness
- Acquire a medical alert bracelet/necklace in case of an emergency

Individuals with uncontrolled Cushing's Syndrome of any origin are at higher risk of infection in general. Although information on people with Cushing's Syndrome and COVID-19 is scarce, given the rarity of the condition, those with Cushing's Syndrome should strictly adhere to CDC recommendations:

- Maintain social distancing to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19
- If experiencing fever, cough, shortness of breath or other symptoms, call both the COVID-19 hotline (check your state government website for contact information) and your primary care physician or endocrinologist

In addition, people with either condition should continue to follow the general guidelines at these times:

- Stay home as much as possible to reduce your risk of being exposed
  - When you do go out in public, avoid crowds and limit close contact with others
  - Avoid non-essential travel
- Wash your hands with soap and water regularly, for at least 20 seconds, especially before eating or drinking and after using the restroom and blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing with a tissue or a flexed elbow, then throw the tissue in the trash
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth or nose when possible.