



It is also important to safeguard your mental health, especially during times of physical distancing

There is a clear indication that the case fatality ratio of confirmed cases of COVID-19 is highest among people living with or affected by noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and in older age groups. This information note sets out what we know on 17 March 2020.

Information note

COVID-19 and NCDs



World Health Organization

COVID-19

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

NCDs and mental health

www.who.int/ncds
www.who.int/mental_health

COVID-19 and NCDs

For people living with or affected by with non-communicable diseases (NCDs):

- The risk of severe COVID-19 disease rises with age
- Although a person of any age can develop serious complications, individuals at higher risk for severe COVID-19 disease and death include:
 - People aged over 40 years. Risk is much higher for persons over 60 years of age.
 - People with NCDs and underlying conditions such as:
 - Hypertension (i.e. raised blood pressure)
 - Diabetes
 - Cardiovascular disease (e.g. persons who have had, or are at risk for, a heart attack or stroke)
 - Chronic respiratory disease (e.g. COPD, asthma)
 - Cancer

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) technical guidance: Patient management

- **Understand the patient's co-morbid condition(s) to tailor the management of critical illness and appreciate the prognosis**
- **Communicate early with patient and family**

During intensive care management of COVID-19, determine which medications should be continued and which should be stopped temporarily. Communicate proactively with patients and families and provide support and prognostic information. Understand the patient's values and preferences regarding life-sustaining interventions.

Based on 55,294 laboratory confirmed cases of COVID-19 in China, there is a clear indication that the case fatality ratio is highest in people living with or affected by NCDs and in older age groups:

- Any condition that increases oxygen needs or reduces the ability of the body to use it properly will put patients at higher risk of the consequences of bilateral viral pneumonia
- Smokers are likely to be more vulnerable to COVID-19 as the act of smoking means that fingers (and possibly contaminated cigarettes) are in contact with lips which increases the possibility of transmission of virus from hand to mouth. Smokers may also already have lung disease or reduced lung capacity which would greatly increase risk of serious illness
- Smoking products such as water pipes often involve the sharing of mouth pieces and hoses, which could facilitate the transmission of COVID-19 in communal and social settings
- Persons with compromised immunity, such as those undergoing treatment for cancer, are at higher risk for complications from infection with COVID-19

Tips for patients with hypertension, diabetes, or other NCDs:

1. Continue to take your medication and follow medical advice
2. Secure a one month supply of your medication or longer if possible
3. Keep a distance of at least one metre from people with a cough, cold or flu
4. Wash your hands often with soap and water
5. Quit smoking and avoid using coping strategies involving alcohol or drugs
6. Safeguard your mental health

A **healthy lifestyle** will make all bodily functions work better, including immunity. Eating healthy diets, with plenty of fruit and vegetables, keeping physically active, quitting smoking, limiting or avoiding alcohol intake, and getting enough sleep are key components of a healthy lifestyle.

