COVID19 / Coronavirus ICC unit advice

The Inherited Cardiac Conditions team at Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital are committed to your care in the long term, we want to provide some guidance in these uncertain times. The recent COVID19 outbreak is receiving a lot of public attention currently, there are clear NHS guidelines for those patients who are ‘extremely vulnerable’. Patients with cardiomyopathies are often not taken into account on these lists as the condition is less common and less well understood by general physicians. We are therefore writing to you to provide some more information.

Those with conditions that are labelled ‘extremely vulnerable’ will be told to self-isolate for 12 weeks, if you are in that group you may have received a text message and letter directly. This guidance is clear and must be followed. There are a group of patients labelled ‘vulnerable’ who are advised to ‘be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures’. Most people with cardiomyopathy will fall in to this group. This means you should not go to work at this current time even if you are a ‘key worker’. You must be particularly careful with staying away from areas where you might pick up Coronavirus (COVID19) and have a low threshold for seeking medical attention if you develop typical symptoms (please see below). This must be by telephoning to most appropriate service rather than turning up at a front door (NHS 111 if mild symptoms, telephone consultation with GP, or direct 999 call if your breathing is deteriorating).

The inherited cardiac conditions team at LHCH are part of a national collaborative of healthcare professionals caring for people with cardiomyopathies known as the Association for Inherited Cardiac Conditions (AICC), they have recently published guidance regarding COVID19, this is copied on the next page:
The AICC wish to provide some guidance for its members in advising their patients with ICCs about COVID-19. This advice is consistent with that submitted to Specialist Commissioning and expected to be available on-line from NHS England and through 111.’

Patients who are at increased risk of complications of infection who will require strict self-isolation to reduce the chance of contracting the virus:

- Symptomatic hypertrophic cardiomyopathy with or without significant obstruction. 
  - This means any disproportionate breathlessness or chest pain on day to day activities. If you have experience a blackout you should contact your team.
- Dilated, arrhythmogenic and hypertrophic cardiomyopathy patients with LV impairment and/or symptomatic left heart failure.
- Arrhythmogenic cardiomyopathy patients with RV impairment and/or symptomatic right heart failure.

In addition to this national guidance the ICC team at LHCH would like to add the following categories of patients to the list of people who will require strict self-isolation:

- Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy patients who have undergone alcohol septal ablation or surgical myectomy for obstruction in Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy.
- Have an implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) for any form of cardiomyopathy.

If you have any queries with regard to the content above then please call and leave a message on the following numbers:

1. For logistics and co-ordination of appointments including telephone consultations: Mark Windle – 01516003180
2. For clinical and healthcare queries: ICC nurse specialist – 01516001270 option 2
In addition to the LHCH and ICC specific advice above we have copied the following information from the gov.uk website which may be of interest, this can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus

**NHS England guidance for those who are at increased risk of severe illness:**

We are advising those who are at increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures.

This group includes those who are:

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (ie anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):
  - chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), emphysema or bronchitis
  - **chronic heart disease, such as heart failure**
  - chronic kidney disease
  - chronic liver disease, such as hepatitis
  - chronic neurological conditions, such as Parkinson’s disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis (MS), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
  - diabetes
  - problems with your spleen – for example, sickle cell disease or if you have had your spleen removed
  - a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy
  - being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- those who are pregnant
**What is social distancing?**

Social distancing measures are steps you can take to reduce social interaction between people. This will help reduce the transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19).

They are to:

1. Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough
2. Avoid non-essential use of public transport when possible
3. Work from home, where possible. Your employer should support you to do this. Please refer to [employer guidance](#) for more information
4. Avoid large and small gatherings in public spaces, noting that pubs, restaurants, leisure centres and similar venues are currently shut as infections spread easily in closed spaces where people gather together.
5. Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media
6. Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services

This advice is likely to be in place for some weeks.

Signed on behalf of the ICC team at Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital

Dr Rob Cooper

Cardiologist with a specialist interest in Inherited Cardiac Conditions