

The background of the entire page features a circular arrangement of diverse cartoon-style people of various ethnicities and ages. In the center, there is a light blue sunburst effect with three red virus particles (spheres with spikes) floating near the main title.

HOW TO STAY SAFE DURING THE

COVID-19

PANDEMIC

Information on COVID-19 for people who use drugs, people living with HIV, their family members and care givers.

Covid-19 is a serious disease and all people living with HIV and people who use drugs should take all recommended preventive measures to minimize exposure to and prevent infection by the virus that causes COVID- 19.

This leaflet tells you how to protect yourself and others.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE COVID-19



What is the novel coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases. COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the latest discovered coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2).



How does the virus spread?

Because the virus affects a person's respiratory system (lungs), the virus mainly spreads from person to person through respiratory droplets. These are **small particles that are released when the sick person coughs or sneezes**. A person may also become infected with the virus if they **breathe in these droplets or if they touch surfaces and objects where the virus has landed and then touch their faces**. This is because the virus can enter a person's body through their eyes, nose and mouth.



What are the symptoms?

Most people experience mild, flu-like symptoms, but for some people it can cause them to become seriously ill and even die. People who are most at risk of becoming seriously ill are elderly people (over 60 years) and people with other medical conditions, like heart disease, diabetes and hypertension. Common symptoms of COVID-19 include:



Fever



Cough



Difficulty breathing



Muscle pain



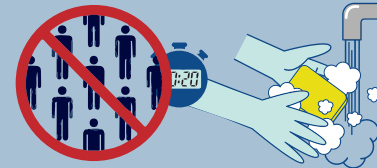
Tiredness



How can you protect yourself and others from being infected with Covid- 19?

Persons who are living with HIV or have underlying conditions are at higher risk of getting seriously ill if they get COVID-19. There are some simple measures you can take to protect yourself from COVID-19.

1. Get vaccinated as soon as it is available.
2. Wear a mask (fabric or disposable) when you around other people or in crowded spaces.
3. Keep at least 1 meter physical distance as much as possible from people outside your household. Avoid crowded spaces, like markets or shopping malls.
4. Clean your hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.
5. Avoid physical contact sick people, especially those who have flu-like symptoms (cough, running nose).

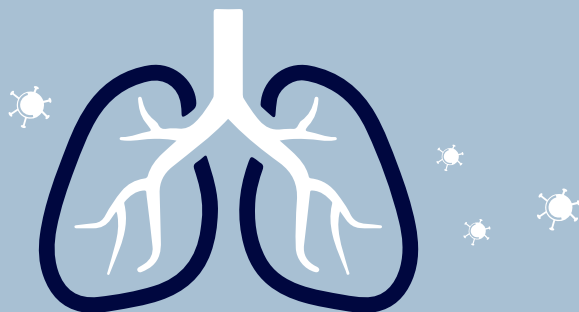


COVID-19 AND PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS



What do you need to know about COVID-19 if you use drugs?

- Coronavirus causes flu like symptoms and can affect your lungs.
- People who use drugs are at increased risk of becoming seriously ill because Covid 19 affects your breathing. Drugs like heroin, methadone and valium can also affect your breathing and make you more vulnerable to infection and fatal overdose.

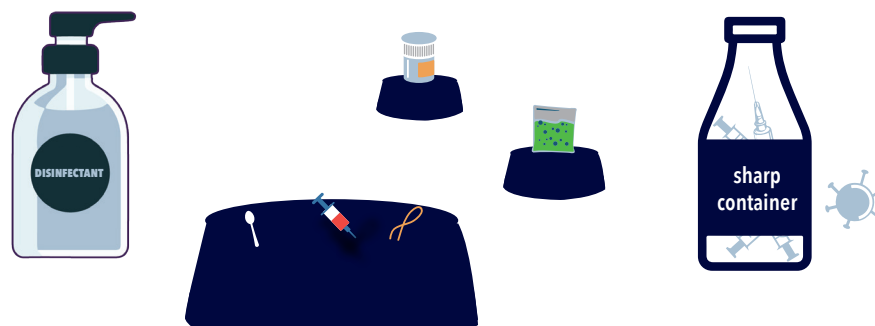


- If you smoke drugs, like crack or meth, cigarettes or vapes, COVID-19 infection will make it more difficult to inhale smoke. Smoking drugs, cigarettes, or vapes will worsen breathing problems.
- BE AWARE that some early symptoms of withdrawal and COVID-19 infection are similar. These include fever and muscle soreness. If symptoms include a persistent cough, it could be COVID-19.
- People who use drugs or alcohol are more likely to experience more severe symptoms of Covid 19, such as serious trouble breathing, struggling to wake up or stay awake, chest pain, especially chest pain that worsens when trying to take deep breaths, confusion, and deliriums.



How to practice safe use to protect yourself and others during the pandemic?

1. Don't share your drug use supplies
2. Disinfect your syringes if you run out of clean syringes
3. Clean your smoking supplies using alcohol-based cleaner (minimum 60% alcohol concentration / use mouthpieces on your smoking supplies)
4. Prepare your drugs yourself and don't handle or touch other people's drugs or equipment and don't let them touch yours. If you must split the drugs, make sure the person who touches the drugs washes their hand before touching it.
5. Wash your hands with soap and hot water/ alcohol-based cleaner or wipes vigorously for at least 20 seconds every time you come into contact with others, after handling money and after you get your drug packages.
6. Avoid injecting alone especially if you inject drugs like heroin, and fentanyl to avoid the risk of overdose.
7. If you are smoking with others There are a couple of things you can do to try to stay safe by staying at least six feet away from other people and coughing or sneezing into your arm.
8. Wash injecting sites before and after injecting with soap and water – use swabs before injecting only.
9. Always prepare drugs on a surface which has been cleaned using antibacterial spray or alcohol wipes or use a temporary surface like kitchen roll or a clean magazine and dispose of it afterwards.
10. Get rid of used syringes in sharp containers. Use something like a plastic laundry detergent bottle or soda bottle. Label these bottles "SHARPS CONTAINER". Do not recycle them





What do you need to do to be prepared for emergency situations?

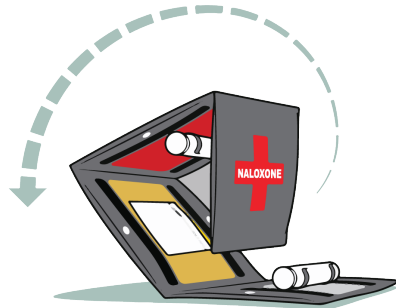
Be prepared for the possibility of syringe exchange and drug treatment programs closing by stockpiling enough supplies to last you a few weeks/ longer.

Stock up on naloxone in the event of an unintentional overdose.

Check with your medical provider to see if services might be changing.

If you are at a greater risk of infection, let your provider/ center know. Ask them if you can take more refills on your OST and other medications.

Don't go to the center if you think you are sick. Talk to your provider so they can deliver supplies to you.



Tips to disinfect your syringes



Container 1 - Water

Draw clean water into the syringe from a cup or container until the barrel is full and flush the contents down the sink.



Container 2 - Thin Bleach

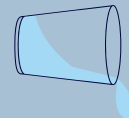
Draw up the bleach into the syringe barrel is full and flush contents down the sink.



Container 3 - Water

Draw clean water into the syringe from a cup or container until the barrel is full and flush the contents down the sink.

Never share cups with anyone.



COVID-19 AND PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV



What do you need to know about Covid-19 if you are living with HIV/ at risk of acquiring HIV?

Recent data shows that people living with HIV appear to be at an increased risk of severe outcomes and death due to COVID-19 compared to other people.

Available literature does not provide conclusive evidence that antiretrovirals could protect individuals from SARS-CoV-2 infection or from becoming seriously ill with the virus.

People taking PrEP or who are taking ARVs with the hopes of preventing COVID-19 need to adopt the same COVID-19 prevention measures as recommended for people in the general population.

People living with HIV should continue taking their antiretroviral therapy during the pandemic to protect themselves and prevent ongoing transmission of HIV.

People living with HIV should continue to take effective antiretroviral therapy even after vaccinated for the Covid-19.



How to protect yourself and others during the pandemic?

People living with HIV should take the same COVID-19 precautions as recommended for the general population: ensure physical distancing; wear masks when appropriate and according to local regulations; wash hands often; practice cough etiquette; seek medical care if symptomatic; and self-isolate if one develops symptoms or has contact with a positive COVID-19 case.



What do you need to do to be prepared for emergency situations?

You should have a supply of your necessary supplies and anti-retroviral therapy (ART) on hand, ideally for 30 days or more.

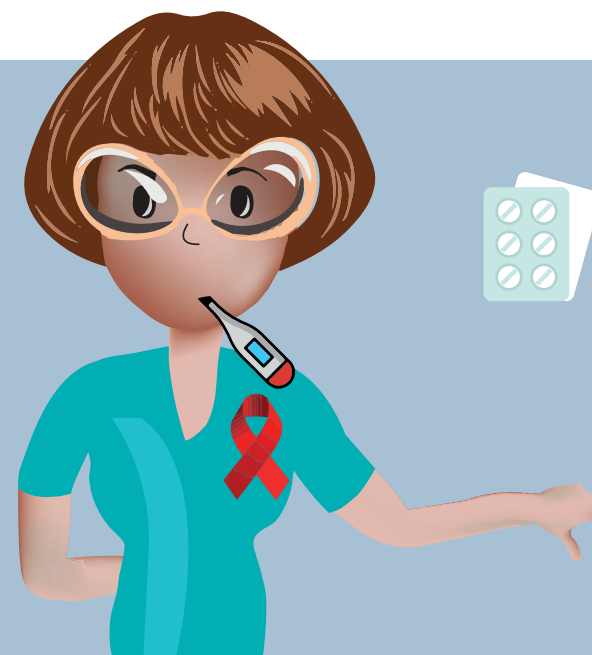
Key populations, including people who use drugs, men who have sex with men, female sex workers, and transgender people should ensure that they have essential means to prevent HIV infection (sterile needles, opioid substitution therapy, condoms, lubricants, and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP).

Talk to your center to know where and how you can access essential services in case of emergency.

Check with your medical provider to see if services might be changing.

If you are at a greater risk of infection, let your provider/ center know. Ask them if you can take more refills on your medications.

Don't go to the center if you think you are sick. Talk to your provider so they can deliver supplies to you.



SHOULD PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV AND PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS BE VACCINATED AGAINST COVID-19?



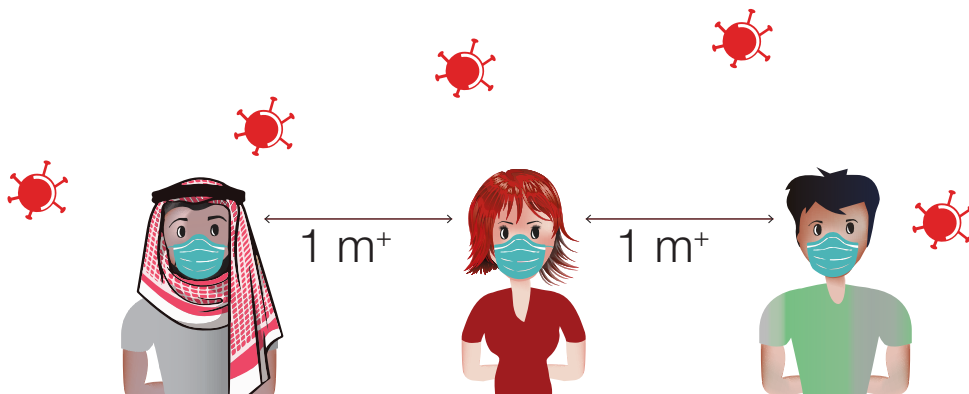
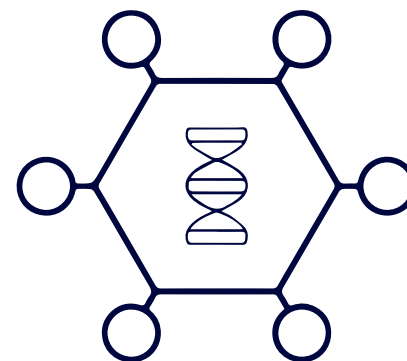
The COVID-19 vaccines under development are believed to be safe for most people, including people living with HIV and people who use drugs. There is therefore no reason why they should not take the vaccine when offered.

COVID-19 vaccines bring the same benefits to people living with HIV / those who use drugs as they bring to all individuals and communities—prevention of severe disease due to SARS-CoV-2 and potentially reduced transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

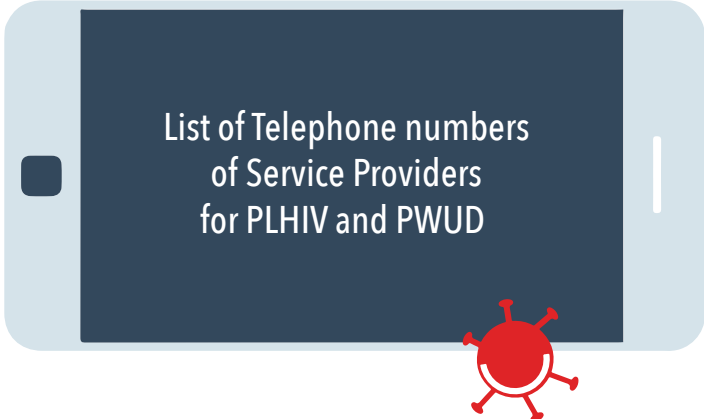
People should continue to take preventive measures against the SARS-CoV-2 virus (physical distancing, regular hand washing, wearing face coverings), even after vaccination.

Most COVID-19 vaccines require you to have 2 doses of the vaccine. When getting your vaccine your medical provider will tell you when you will need to get your second dose.

If 2 doses are required, then make sure you get both as this will provide you the best protection from severe COVID-19.



WHERE TO ACCESS ESSENTIAL SERVICES?

A graphic of a smartphone with a dark screen. On the screen, the text 'List of Telephone numbers of Service Providers for PLHIV and PWUD' is displayed in white. Below the screen, a red COVID-19 virus icon is shown.

List of Telephone numbers of Service Providers for PLHIV and PWUD

SEXUAL HEALTH & HIV SERVICES

Marsa | 01-380515
SIDC (*Soins Infirmiers et Développement Communautaire*) | 01-491705/482428
Vivre Positif - Sin El Fil | 01 482 428

OUTPATIENT DRUG TREATMENT, REHABILITATION & OST CENTERS

Association Justice et Miséricorde (AJEM) - Roumieh | 01-901560/03-131570
Dahr El Bacheh Governmental Hospital - Roumieh | 04-872145
Skoun - Rafic Hariri University Hospital & Baalback | 01-845 512
SIDC - Escala - Sin El Fil | 01-491705

OUTPATIENT DRUG TREATMENT & REHABILITATION CENTERS

Cénacle de la Lumière (CDLL) | 01-211311
Civil Council Against Addiction (CCAA) - Saïda | 07-752096

INPATIENT DRUG TREATMENT & REHABILITATION CENTERS

Ain Wazein Hospital - Ain Wazen | 05-502416 / 05-502417
American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC) - Hamra | 01-350000 ext. 5650
Bellevue Medical Center - Mansourieh | 01 682 666
Bonheur du Ciel - Nahr Ibrahim | 01- 255220/ 03 -125347/ 70- 044356
Dahr El Bacheh Governmental Hospital - Roumieh | 04-872145
Hôtel Dieu de France Hospital - Ashrafieh | 01-615300
Hôpital Psychiatrique de la Croix - Jal El Dib | 04-710224
Jouwayya Hospital - Jouwayya | 07-411080 / 07-411081
Islamic Health Society - Beirut | 70- 185586
Mount Lebanon Hospital - Hazmieh | 05-957000
Nusroto - Zahle | 08-808801
Oum el Nour | 76-750738
Rafic Hariri University Hospital (RHUH) - Bir Hassan | 01-832909 / 01-832900 / 01-832902
Saint Charles Hospital - Baabda | 05/451100 - 05/ 953444
Saint Georges Hospital University Medical Center - Ashrafieh | 01-441000

NEEDLE AND SYRINGE SERVICES

SIDC (*Soins Infirmiers et Développement Communautaire*) | 01-491705/482428

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Blue Mission | 07-732636/78-965062
Embrace | 1564
Idracc | 03-730475
Islamic Health Society - Mental Health Services | 01-554196
Marsa | 01-380515
SIDC | 01-491705/482428
SKOUN | 78-824730

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Middle East and North Africa Harm Reduction Association

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+961 1 49 32 11 | info@menahra.org | www.menahra.org

Resources

- Statement on risk of COVID-19 for people living with HIV (EACS & BHIVA) [English, Russian] (25.05.2020)
- COVID-19: information for people living with viral hepatitis (WHA) [English] (02.04.2020)
- OFDT COVID-19 Bulletin n° 1 [French] (01.04.2020)
- What people living with HIV need to know about HIV and COVID-19 [English] (19.03.2020)
- Leaflet: information on COVID-19 for people with immunocompromising condition (ECDC) [English] (12.03.2020)
- COVID-19: HIV prevention, treatment, care and support for people who use drugs and people in prisons (UNODC) [English, Russian] (01.03.2020)
- Coronavirus (COVID-19) - advice for people using drugs [English] (01.05.2020)
- Yale Program in Addiction Medicine. Guidance for People Who Use Substances on COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus)