Coronavirus Guidance for Pediatric and Adult Patients with Congenital Heart Disease (CHD)

Updated 03/14/2020

- We at the Duke Pediatric and Congenital Heart Center are monitoring statewide and national (CDC) recommendations closely.
- Everyone – including our patients with CHD – should practice basic infection control preventions to minimize the risk of getting or spreading coronavirus.
- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) identifies certain patient populations at higher risk for serious illness with COVID-19. This includes older adults (greater than age 60), and patients with lung disease, heart disease, and diabetes. Many patients with repaired congenital heart disease are not at risk for severe illness with COVID-19 and can practice basic prevention guidelines.

We have identified the following high-risk CHD conditions:
- Single ventricle patients (includes patients with hypoplastic left heart syndrome, tricuspid atresia, double inlet left ventricle)
- Transplant patients
- Patients with symptomatic heart failure (those with activity limitations) and/or decreased heart function
- Pulmonary hypertension
- Unrepaired complex CHD
- CHD in addition to having other chronic illnesses (lung disease, kidney disease)

Precautions

Per CDC recommendations, we recommend the following precautions for our high-risk patients:
- Stock up on supplies.
- Take everyday precautions to keep space between yourself and others (>6 feet recommended)
- When going out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash your hands often
- Avoid crowds as much as possible
- Avoid cruise travel and non-essential air travel
- During a COVID-19 outbreak in your community, stay home as much as possible to reduce the risk of being exposed.

Use of Face Masks

- The benefit of wearing masks in public is controversial (even for immunosuppressed patients) and it is unknown how much wearing a mask will help prevent infection. Most surgical masks are not tight fitting and germs can get through them. We, and the CDC, are not recommending routine mask use for infection protection outside the hospital at this time.
School Attendance

• We are monitoring statewide and national recommendations closely. As of Saturday, March 14, 2020, all North Carolina schools are closed. Further recommendations will be made as conditions progress.

Work Recommendations

• We are discouraging high risk patients from working jobs with significant exposure to others (i.e., retail establishments)

• For patients employed in health-care related fields, we are currently recommending that high-risk patients avoid contact with all patients with respiratory illness.

• Patients, particularly high risk patients, are encouraged to work from home if feasible.

Travel Recommendations

• We are currently discouraging all international travel. Travel within the United States should be undertaken with caution and is discouraged in high-risk patients.

In general, remember three key points:

1. Children appear to be at the lowest risk for complications from COVID-19
2. This is a new and rapidly evolving situation, and therefore expect that “normal” activities and expectations must change immediately
3. Social distancing and good handwashing/hygiene can significantly decrease risk of infection and slow any spread of the infection through our community