

Media Release

For Immediate Release

08/19/2020

Rowan County Case Information:
<https://bit.ly/rowan-covid19-hub>

COVID-19 information contacts

Website: www.rowancountync.gov/covid-19

Email: covid-19@rowancountync.gov

Phone: 980-432-1800

Certain Medical Conditions Increase One's Risk of Getting COVID-19

Over the past couple of months, Rowan County citizens have definitely been affected by the coronavirus. To date, Rowan County has had 2,419 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 55 deaths; and as of last week, Rowan has maintained a percent positive of a little over 9%. This percentage of positive cases is almost double of what the state public health officials would like to see.

With that being said, it is now known that individuals with underlying health conditions, no matter their age, are at a higher risk of developing COVID. Not only are these individuals at a higher risk, they are also more likely to have more severe symptoms and perhaps suffer more complications. Below is a list of certain health conditions that increase an individual's risks of getting sick with COVID, along with specific suggestions that may increase one's likelihood of staying well and COVID-free:

Asthma (moderate-to-severe)

Actions to take:

- Keep your asthma under control by following an [Asthma Action Plan](#).
- Continue to use any prescribed inhalers with steroids in them. Also avoid your [asthma triggers](#).

Cancer (Current Patients)

Actions to take:

- Have a conversation with your healthcare provider or care team to discuss your individual level of risk based on your condition, your treatment, and the level of transmission in your community.
- Do not stop taking your medicines or alter your treatment plan without talking to your healthcare provider.

Chronic Kidney Disease

Actions to take:

- Continue your diet as directed by your healthcare provider.
- Have shelf-stable food choices to help you follow your kidney diet.
- If you are on dialysis:
 - Contact your dialysis clinic and your healthcare provider if you feel sick or have concerns.
 - Do NOT miss your treatments.
 - Plan to have enough food on hand to follow the [KCER 3-Day Emergency Diet](#) [Planexternal icon](#) for dialysis patients in case you are unable to maintain your normal treatment schedule.

Remember the 3 Ws: WEAR (cloth face covering), WAIT (6 feet apart) & WASH (your hands often)!

Diabetes (Type 1, 2, and Gestational)

Actions to take:

- Test your blood sugar and keep track of the results.
- Make sure that you have enough insulin.
- Refer to the CDC's [sick day tips for people with diabetes](#).

Hemoglobin Disorders such as Sickle Cell Disease and Thalassemia

Actions to take:

- Ask your healthcare provider about telemedicine or remote healthcare visits, and know [when to go to the emergency department](#).
- Work with your healthcare provider to manage [medicines and therapies](#) for your disorder (including hydroxyurea, chelation therapy, blood transfusions, and prescriptions for pain management) and any other health condition you may have (such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and arthritis).
- Try to prevent vaso-occlusive episodes or pain crises by [avoiding possible triggers](#).

Hypertension and/or a History of Strokes or Heart Disease

Actions to take:

- Follow your healthcare provider's recommendations for diet and exercise while maintaining social distancing precautions.
- Continue angiotensin converting enzyme inhibitors (ACE-I) or angiotensin-II receptor blockers (ARB) as prescribed by your healthcare provider for indications such as heart failure or high blood pressure.

Obesity (a [Body Mass Index](#)(BMI) of 30 or above)

Actions to take:

- Continue to shop for healthier food options, whether in person or online. Remember shopping the perimeter of the grocery store is always healthier than shopping within the inside aisles.
- Follow your healthcare provider's recommendations for nutrition and physical activity, while maintaining social distancing precautions.

Smoking (Current and Past Smokers)

Actions to take:

- If you currently smoke, quit. If you used to smoke, don't start again. [Counseling from a healthcare provider and Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)-approved medications](#) can double the chances of quitting smoking.
- For help quitting smoking, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or visit [Quitline.com](#).

Research has also shown that individuals that have a **weakened immune system, liver disease, chronic lung disease, are pregnant, and/or suffer from dementia or other neurological disorders** may also be at an increased risk of developing COVID-19.

If you do have an underlying health condition(s), it is important that you keep regular doctor's appointments. This is especially true if you have been exposed to COVID-19. In addition to regular doctor's appointments, it is also important to have at least a 30-day supply of all your medicines. Finally and most importantly if you do have underlying health conditions, do not delay life-saving

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treatment or emergency care, if needed. The fear of contracting COVID-19 is less serious than suffering from a life-threatening health emergency.

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