

## **Recommendations for patients diagnosed with multiple sclerosis regarding the coronavirus epidemic.**

Patients with multiple sclerosis (SM) might have lower immune system capacity due to their treatment that they use to stop the disease from progressing further. This means that they might be more vulnerable to some viral or bacterial infections. We do not have the exact information on how the disease COVID-19 affects the patients with SM treated with the preparate group DMT (Treatment that modulates or suppresses the immune reactions of the body). Through the coronavirus pandemic, it is very important to follow basic hygiene rules and recommendations for patients.

### **Some basic information about Corona viruses:**

These viruses belong to the group Coronaviridae. They are pleomorphic RNA viruses (round, oval or even ablong) with a spiral symmetry, 60 – 220 nm big. Human coronaviruses are divided into two genres – those belonging to the genus Coronavirus affect the respiratory tract and can cause cold or even pneumonia. Until the year 2002, coronavirus infection only affected upper respiratory tracts or caused diarrhea.

The situation has worsened in years 2002-2003, when a new deadly disease SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) appeared. This disease is also caused by a coronavirus.

### **Coronavirus infection – disease (COVID-19):**

It is a disease discovered in 2019. There was not identified a phylum responsible for this disease in humans until then. Currently, it causes a worldwide pandemic.

### **How should multiple sclerosis patients protect themselves?**

WHO (the World Health Organization) recommends prevention against the virus, thorough personal hygiene, for not only patients, but also all people of all age groups.

### **For patients with multiple sclerosis, we recommend to follow these steps:**

#### **a) The most effective form of protection is to stay at home and avoid contact with other people:**

- strictly avoid any contact with individuals tested positive for the coronavirus
- avoid contact in larger groups of people until the end of epidemic. (information from the institution MZ SR, [www.health.gov.sk](http://www.health.gov.sk))
- limit or completely stop using the public transport
- keep at least 2 m distance between you and other people. Especially from those who cough or sneeze.
- use the E-prescription for prescribing the necessary medicaments
- discuss any problems or questions with your doctor or nurse by phone
- if possible, work from home to avoid travelling to and from work and therefore to avoid the contact with other people. Do meetings by phone or online.
- avoid all the social or sporting activities (going to theatre, movies, family visits...)

**b) Follow basic hygiene practices and rules:**

- wash your hands often (water and soap, sanitizing soaps, liquid soaps with dispensers)
- do not touch your face, nose, eyes or mouth if your hands are not clean
- clean (especially surfaces, handles and floors) and air often
- do not encounter with people around you, do not shake hands
- use masks covering your mouth and nose when not at home (shopping, doctor visit, going to the pharmacy, out with the garbage, encounter with the postman...)
- use protection gloves when not at home

**c) Follow rational nutritional and hydration plan:**

- follow normal standards of rational nutrition, intake of the vitamins D and C
- when suffering from a respirational infection, eat a lot of fruits, vegetables and vitamin C and completely avoid smoking
- Drink tea, order only packaged drinks
- prefer the purchase of packaged food
- prefer food from Slovak production
- it is necessary to spend at least 20 minutes a day in the sun for the correct metabolism of the D vitamin and sleep at least 7 hours a day

**d) Check-ups for MS patients:**

Changes in the operation hours at the doctor's offices and hospitals, planned check-ups of patients and their treatment (or its interruption or its postponation) are individually the responsibility of each neurologist. The doctor has to consider the risks of interrupting the treatments based on the type of the medicament, its influence on the immune system, consider the environment from where the patient comes from and the epidemiological situation and other health complications of each patient (comorbidities). Patient should not individually disrupt any form of his treatment, since this could significantly worsen his diagnosis. We recommend consulting ones recent condition with the neurologist by phone and arrange a check-up. In the case of acute worsening of patient condition, attack, the standard methods of the attack treatment with corticoids should be applied. The neurologist individually considers the progress of the treatment and their immunity status regarding their ability to travel for the check-ups or their inability to work when working in the hazardous environment.

*These recommendations were issued by:*

**doc. MUDr. Jarmila Szilasiova, PhD. and the neurologists from MS centres**

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*This information was issued and published for patients in collaboration with professionals by the Berlina company. Thank you.*

*Dr. Katarina Sutovska, MBA*

## Other frequently asked questions based on the information from WHO:

### **In what areas is COVID-19 most frequently spread?**

This disease is spread equally in all areas, despite different climate conditions.

### **Can cold weather kill the coronavirus?**

There is no reason to assume that cold weather can kill the new coronavirus or other diseases. The normal temperature of the human body is around 36,5 °C to 37 °C without considering the outside temperature or weather. The most effective way of preventing the new coronavirus is washing hands frequently with soap and water or using hand sanitizers.

### **What to do when suspecting the infection COVID-19?**

Contact your doctor (GP) by phone or call the call centres.

### **Phone numbers and e-mails for public regarding COVID-19:**

The regional sector of the ministry of public health is strengthening their call centres in Slovakia. There is 36 phone lines available to public.

These phone lines of the ministry for public health are available non-stop:

- Úrad verejného zdravotníctva Slovenskej republiky – 0917 222 682
- RÚ verejného zdravotníctva so sídlom v Banskej Bystrici – 0918 659 580
- RÚ verejného zdravotníctva so sídlom v Bratislave – 0917 426 075
- RÚ verejného zdravotníctva so sídlom v Nitre – 0948 495 915
- RÚ verejného zdravotníctva so sídlom v Trnave - 0905 903 053
- RÚ verejného zdravotníctva so sídlom v Trenčíne – 0911 763 203
- RÚ verejného zdravotníctva so sídlom v Košiciach – 0918 389 841
- RÚ verejného zdravotníctva so sídlom v Prešove – 0911 908 823
- RÚ verejného zdravotníctva so sídlom v Žiline – 0905 342 812
- RÚ verejného zdravotníctva so sídlom v Bardejove - 0917 121 946
- RÚ verejného zdravotníctva so sídlom v Poprade - 0911 635 260, 0903 905 080
- RÚ verejného zdravotníctva so sídlom v Michalovciach - 0948 518 954

### **Phone contacts for public:**

<b>Inštitúcia</b>	<b>Call centrum</b>	<b>e-mail</b>
ÚVZ SR	0917 222 682	novykoronavirus@uvzsr.sk
RÚVZ Bratislava	0917 426 075	X

RÚVZ Trnava	0905 903 053	
RÚVZ Senica	0907 169 312	se.koronavirus@uvzs.sk
RÚVZ Galanta	0907 996 734	ga.epid@uvzs.sk
RÚVZ Dunajská Streda	0910 459 200	ds.koronavirus@uvzs.sk
RÚVZ Nitra	0948 495 915	nr.sekretariat@uvzs.sk
RÚVZ Komárno	0911 305 651	koronaviruskn@uvzs.sk
RÚVZ Levice	0910 901 129	lv.riaditel@uvzs.sk
RÚVZ Nové Zámky	035/640 09 97	nz.epid@uvzs.sk
RÚVZ Topoľčany	038/532 63 91	to.epid@uvzs.sk
RÚVZ Trenčín	0917 763 203	tn.covid19@uvzs.sk
RÚVZ Považská Bystrica	0911 727 930 042/44 50 233	pb.epid@uvzs.sk
RÚVZ Prievidza	046/519 20 26	koronavirus@ruvzpd.sk
RÚVZ Žilina	0905 342 818	X
RÚVZ Čadca	0919 453 544	ca.koronavirus@uvzs.sk
RÚVZ Dolný Kubín	0908 460 521	m.varmusova@gmail.com
RÚVZ Liptovský Mikuláš	0903 550 420	X
	0911 236 988	
	0903 540 635	
RÚVZ Martin	043/401 29 27	mt.epid@uvzs.sk
	0902 740 766	
	0911 514 878	
RÚVZ Banská Bystrica	0918 659 580	X
RÚVZ Zvolen	045/555 23 58	zv.epid@uvzs.sk
RÚVZ Žiar nad Hronom	0911 214 488	zh.epid@uvzs.sk
RÚVZ Lučenec	0905 536 551	lc.epidemiologia@vzs.sk
	0915 885 813	
	0918 601 924	
	047/43 235 72	
RÚVZ Veľký Krtíš	047/48 30 747	ruvzv@uvzs.sk
RÚVZ Rimavská Sobota	0918 542 763	rs.epid@uvzs.sk
RÚVZ Košice	0918 389 841	koronavirus@ruvzke.sk
RÚVZ Michalovce	0948 518 954	X
	056/6880 617	
	056/6880 621	
RÚVZ Rožňava	0905 439 276	rv.koronavirus@uvzs.sk
RÚVZ Spišská Nová Ves	0910 118 266	X
RÚVZ Trebišov	059/67 24 993	tv.epid@uvzs.sk
	056/ 38 13 231	
	0918 680 305	
	0915 577 356	
RÚVZ Prešov	0911 908 823	X
RÚVZ Bardejov	0917 121 946	
		bj.epida@uvzs.sk

RÚVZ Humenné	0908 440 174	hn.htc@uvzsr.sk
RÚVZ Poprad	0911 635 260 0903 905 080 052/772 2604 052/7125474 0902 543 162 0902 030 537	pp.epi@uvzsr.sk pp.sekr@uvzsr.sk pp.riaditel@uvzsr.sk
RÚVZ Senica	0917149 459 034/6909327	
RÚVZ Stará Ľubovňa	0910 440 662 0911 715 571	sl.epida@uvzsr.sk
RÚVZ Svidník	0910 580 707	sk.epidemiologia@uvzsr.sk
RÚVZ Vranov nad Topľou	0915 783 454	

**National centrum for medical information (non-stop) –0800 221 234**

### **Can hand dryers kill the coronavirus?**

No, hand dryers cannot kill the coronavirus. Hands need to be washed with soap and water or sanitize with alcohol. They need to be dried with clean paper wipes.

If you live at home with multiple family members, give all of them their own towel and wash it regularly.

### **Can the coronavirus be killed by using UV lamps?**

No, it can not. Its use can cause various rashes or skin irritations.

### **Can eating garlic help?**

There is no evidence that the consumption of garlic kills the coronavirus.

### **Do antibiotics help against the coronavirus?**

Antibiotics do not help against the coronavirus. They are only used for the treatment of bacterial infections.

### **Does the coronavirus affect only old people?**

People of all age groups can be infected with the new coronavirus (2019-nCoV). It seems that older people with existing health issues (such as asthma, diabetes, heart diseases) are more vulnerable for viruses.

WHO recommends for people of all age groups to practice good respiratory and hand hygiene.

### **Do vaccines protect us from the new coronavirus?**

There is currently no available vaccine that could protect us from the new coronavirus. The scientists are actively working on its development.

*Resources:*

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