

Hypertension management during the COVID-19 pandemic: Statement for patients with hypertension in resource-limited settings from faculty members of Johns Hopkins University involved in Resolve to Save Lives

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The number of cases of COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) are rapidly increasing in many countries. The attention of health care providers and patients are shifting to this new disease. We emphasize **the importance of continuing the care of hypertension and other chronic diseases even in this situation.** The COVID-19 pandemic will end at some point, but chronic diseases like hypertension will persist.

Hypertension is the leading cause of heart attack, stroke, and death. Hypertension medications reduce the risk of these outcomes. It is important for patients to continue taking their medications. We have recently seen several concerns about hypertension care in this situation. We provide our recommendations and other resources for some of these concerns below. The main focus of the Hopkins team is resource-limited settings, but some of these concerns are relevant in other settings.

Concern	Our recommendation	Other resources
Should I keep taking my hypertension medication(s)?	Yes. It is crucial for you to continue taking your medication(s).	Resolve to Save Lives
Should I go to a clinic for routine hypertension care?	It depends on whether you have your hypertension medication(s). If you still have hypertension medication(s) and your blood pressure is generally stable, it seems acceptable to skip a routine visit in this unique situation. Best to do so after confirming with your doctors via phone, text, or e-mail. Some countries are trying to implement telemedicine (meaning clinic consultation via phone or Internet). Ask your doctors whether this is an option. If you do not have medication(s), you should get them at a clinic or pharmacy as soon as possible.	
My medication(s) will run out soon.	Secure medication(s) for a month or more. If you don't have medication(s) for a month, contact your healthcare providers as soon as possible. In this pandemic, some countries are allowing physicians to	

	<p>prescribe medication(s) for a longer period (e.g., 3 months).</p> <p>If your medication is running out and you can't get a refill for some reason, we suggest that you take a pill every other day instead of every day. This is not be a perfect solution, but it is practical in this situation.</p>	
<p>Is there anything I should be careful of when I visit clinics or pharmacies?</p>	<p>Follow key procedures recommended by expert organizations to minimize the risk of getting COVID-19 infection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try your best to keep a distance of 2 meters or roughly 6 feet from other people • Wash your hands before and after going to clinics and pharmacies • Use hand sanitizer if available • Avoid touching your face (eyes, nose, or mouth) <p>If you feel sick (fever or coughing), ask your doctor whether your family can pick up your medication(s).</p>	<p>American College of Physicians</p>
<p>I have heard that some hypertension medications (i.e., angiotensin converting enzyme [ACE] inhibitors and angiotensin receptor blockers [ARBs]) increase the risk of severe complications of COVID-19.</p>	<p>At this moment, the evidence is inconclusive. We agree with organizations which recommend that patients continue their medication(s), including ACE inhibitors and ARBs.</p>	<p>International Society of Hypertension</p> <p>Resolve to Save Lives</p>