



24th March, 2020

Dear Heart Transplant recipient,

We are writing to address the current concerns regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. We are introducing a number of changes within the department to minimize unnecessary risk to patients and staff.

Telehealth

Where possible, patient reviews will now be done via Telehealth. You will be contacted regarding this by one of our clinic nurses in the days prior to your appointment, and instructions will be provided for access to Telehealth. There are occasional exceptions to this, including patients who have been transplanted within the last 6 months, and unwell patients requiring review at the discretion of the treating physician.

If you are being reviewed via Telehealth, we request that you have a blood test done locally approximately 72 hours prior to your appointment, to ensure result availability at the time of review. Our preferred pathology collectors are Sydpath and Laverty as we have direct access to results. If you have bloods taken at any other pathology service we request that you ensure we receive a copy of the results via fax 02 8382 2505.

If you require prescriptions, we can arrange for medicines that are only available through the Outpatient Hospital Pharmacy to be sent out to you. Please email us at hltxscriptline@stvincents.com.au All other prescriptions should be sourced through your GP and local pharmacy.

Heart lung treatment room

Patient are still able to present for routine treatments (e.g. IVIG) provided you have an appointment, and are feeling well with no viral symptoms. We request that you thoroughly clean your hands with hand sanitizer prior to coming in to clinic and after touching any surfaces or objects.

If you are unwell

Patients displaying any viral symptoms SHOULD NOT present to the heart lung clinic for review without contacting our team first. Please call 8382 4115 or 8382

3158 if you experience fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, or lethargy for further advice. We will arrange review via Telehealth if required and you may be directed to proceed to your nearest Covid-19 testing centre – these can be found online:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Pages/coronavirus-testing.aspx>

Heart Biopsies

Heart transplant recipients who require heart biopsies will still need to attend the heart lung clinic on the day that the biopsy is scheduled. Patients will be contacted by a clinic nurse on the day prior to your appointment to check that you do not have any viral symptoms. Blood tests will be organised on the day. The clinic doctor will advise if a Chest X Ray is required.

Travel

We strongly advise against all air travel, both international and domestic. Many travel companies are offering refunds and/or travel credits for expenses already incurred. If you require an additional letter for insurance purposes please email the nursing coordinators on svhs.hlcreresults@svha.org.au

Social Distancing

We suggest practicing social distancing as much as practicable.

While practising social distancing, people can travel to work (including public transport). For non-essential activities outside the workplace or attendance at schools, universities and childcare - social distancing includes:

- avoiding crowds and mass gatherings where it is difficult to keep the appropriate distance away from others
- avoiding small gatherings in enclosed spaces, for example family celebrations
- attempting to keep a distance of 1.5 metres between themselves and other people where possible, for example when they are out and about in public place
- avoiding shaking hands, hugging, or kissing other people
- avoiding visiting vulnerable people, such as those in aged care facilities or hospitals, infants, or people with compromised immune systems due to illness or medical treatment

Additional Enquiries

Between 8am and 4pm, with any COVID-19 enquiries, you can contact the nurse-in-charge on 8382 4115 or 8382 3158. For any urgent after-hours enquiries, you can contact the heart transplant registrar on-call.

Many thanks,

HLC clinic staff