

Staying Safe in Multigenerational Households



What is a multigenerational household?

A multigenerational household, or *grandfamily*, is one where more than two age groups live in the same home. This could be adults with children whose parents (the grandparents) also live with them. Or, it could be any other family members of different generations living together.

Multigenerational households have special needs when it comes to Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19). This is true when someone has kidney disease and is living on dialysis or with a transplant. **Remember—everyone needs to protect against COVID-19. Anyone of any age can get sick with the virus.**

Here are some common needs and ideas on how to make it work.

Check out the useful resources on the next page.

Grandparents

People in this generation may be the most vulnerable to COVID-19 due to age or chronic illnesses, like kidney failure.



It is important to understand and follow medical advice. This includes taking prescription medicines as directed. As with most people, it is best to go out only for necessary healthcare, like dialysis. For other appointments, look into telemedicine.

Adults

Adults with children and responsibilities for their aged parents are sometimes called, “the Sandwich Generation.” They may have obligations at work and for the household while taking care of their parents and their kids.



Managing stress levels and staying on top mental and physical health is important. This is true whether someone has kidney disease or not.

This group may run most of the errands, as with groceries and supplies. Stay vigilant about hand hygiene, social distancing, and wearing a mask.

Kidney transplant recipients are at higher risk for getting COVID-19. It is important to remind all family members to re-read the precautions to make sure all are followed.

Teenagers

Teens are in the process of understanding themselves and the world with new independence. Teens’ social life and special events are especially important.



Communication is key. Listening is as important as talking.

- Help them set a schedule.
- Make dinner a time to shift gears from the school day.
- Allow them to have time away from school and chores.

Children

Young children may not understand why things changed. How to explain things depends on their age and their questions.



When talking to your children, meet them where they are based on their ages, personalities, and emotional needs.

You know the young people in your life best. For most children and teens, it is best to:

- Share information about what is happening in a calm and factual way. This can help ease their worries.
- Let them know that staying home is the best way to keep everyone healthy. Talk about how social distancing and wearing masks are important. They can be “super heroes” to help slow the virus and protect others.
- Invite them to openly share feelings. It is normal to feel frustrated, sad, or disappointed right now.



What if someone in the house gets sick with COVID-19?

Just like for any emergency, it is important to have a plan in place if someone in your home gets COVID-19.



Basics to get started:

- Have the sick person wear a face mask.
- Use a separate bathroom.
- Avoid visitors.

If you need to share a bedroom with someone who is sick:

- Open a window, if possible.
- Maintain at least 6 feet between beds, if possible. If this is not possible, sleep head-to-toe.
- Put up a curtain around or place a quilt, or large bedspread to separate the sick person's bed.

If you need to share a bathroom with someone who is sick:

- The sick person should clean and disinfect the commonly touched surfaces after use. If that is not possible, then the person cleaning should:
 - Open the outside door and windows and turn on the bathroom vent fan, if you have one.
 - Ensure safe storage of disinfectants, including storing cleaning products securely away from children.

This can be a challenging time for many families. It is also a time to support each other through an unprecedented pandemic—and build a tighter family. Take time to listen to each others thoughts and feelings. Figure out what each person needs and talk about it together.

Fun activities can lift everyone's mental health. Share stories of the family's history and laugh about past family gatherings. Find ways to express your love and affection for one another—you got this!

If you want to learn more, check out these sites:

Grandparents

- [COVID-19 and Older Adults](#)
- [Caregiving for the Elderly During COVID-19](#)
- [Kidney Patient Care: Your Guide to Using Telemedicine](#)

Adults

- [Tips for Sandwich Generation Caregivers in the Era of COVID-19](#)
- [How to Protect Yourself and Others](#)
- [Transplant Recipients Living with Loved Ones](#)

Children

- [How to Talk to Your Kids About COVID-19](#)
- [Talking with Children About Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- [Videos for Kids and Parents About COVID-19](#)

Teens

- [CDC COVID-19 Toolkit for Young Adults: 15 to 21](#)
- [How to Help Teens Cope](#)

Additional Information

- [Fact Sheet for Grandfamilies and Multigenerational Families](#)
- [Preparing your Family and Household for COVID-19](#)



“As a transplant recipient living with my sister and her family, we are adjusting to stay safe during COVID-19. Communication is key. My family has shared with others (teachers, co-workers, and friends) that there is a high-risk person in the house and a need to be extra careful.”

—Derek, Patient Subject Matter Expert

“As a kidney patient, the most rewarding thing for me is the encouragement I get from my family and close friends. My family has a group text with 7–8 of us sharing important news, jokes, and information affecting childcare education.”

—Janice, Patient Subject Matter Expert

“My family always talks about not bringing anything home to my husband, who is on peritoneal dialysis. We make sure to talk on a daily basis about the things going on.”

—Yalonda, Family Member Subject Matter Expert

