





Be **SAFE** from #coronavirus

if you are 60+ or if you have an underlying condition like:

-  **Cardiovascular disease**
-  **Respiratory condition**
-  **Diabetes**

by avoiding crowded areas or places where you might interact with people who are sick and check WHO

Learn more to Be **READY** for #COVID19:  
[www.who.int/COVID-19](http://www.who.int/COVID-19)

 UNITED NATIONS 

11 May 2020 – Evidence so far suggests that older persons and persons with chronic conditions, such as diabetes and hypertension, are more vulnerable to COVID-19 and particularly vulnerable to severe disease and mortality from the virus. COVID-19 data in Lebanon shows that around 22 out of 25 patients who died had an underlying chronic condition.

The main noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) include:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Chronic respiratory disease
- Diabetes
- Cancer

Particular risk factors for NCDs make people more vulnerable to becoming severely ill with COVID-19. These include tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diets, and physical inactivity. Risk factors are highly prevalent in Lebanon. The latest noncommunicable diseases risk factors survey (2017) shows that 38% of the Lebanese population smoked, around 23% consumed alcohol, and 61% did not meet the minimum requirements for physical activity.

### **WHO's response**

Globally, a technical working group on NCD and COVID-19 has been established to support the

implementation of policies for the prevention and control of NCDs and their risk factors during the COVID-19 outbreak; and to limit the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on avoidable mortality and avoidable disability for people living with, or affected by, NCDs and their risk factors.

In Lebanon, WHO has been supporting the provision of medicines for the management of chronic diseases, including mental health conditions, in line with the WHO essential medicine list. With financial support from the European Union, essential medications for noncommunicable diseases are available in a network of 420 primary health care centres and dispensaries across Lebanon. Around 200 me000 patients are registered in the chronic medications program, which is operated for the Ministry of Public Health by the YMCA.

Around half of these patients, both refugees, migrant workers and vulnerable Lebanese are supported through donor funding for NCD medications through this system. To fill in the additional gaps, WHO secured funding from Central Emergency Response Fund to procure additional chronic medications and specialized mental health medications for the second quarter of 2020. More fundraising is ongoing to complement the current medications gap, worsened by the COVID-19 outbreak as it delayed international procurement, as well as local transfer of government funds to the chronic medications programme operated by YMCA.

In addition, given the increasing needs, WHO Lebanon is currently working on rationalizing and optimizing the essential medicines list for chronic medications in order to improve cost-effectiveness.

### **Related links**

[Read more about NCDs](#)

[Regional updates on COVID-19](#)

[Access the latest information and global updates](#)

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