

Advice on Coronavirus (COVID-19) for cancer patients currently on treatment

If you are a cancer patient on treatment, whether chemotherapy or radiotherapy, you should continue to attend for your treatment unless you have been contacted to reschedule.

If you have been advised by a public health doctor that you are a 'close contact' of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19), call the unit first for advice before attending.

If you are concerned about symptoms of coronavirus (cough, shortness of breath, breathing difficulties or high temperature), contact your GP or oncology unit before attending.

Phone your doctor if you have any symptoms of coronavirus and are concerned.

Reduce your risk

Some cancer treatments can cause a weak immune system. Other lung viruses can cause severe illness in people who have a weak immune system. This is likely to be the same for coronavirus. This is why you should take extra care to prevent infection if you have a weak immune system.

If you are on cancer treatment, take extra care to protect yourself from coronavirus:

- Wash your hands properly and often with soap and water or alcohol hand rub
- Cover your cough, dispose of the tissue, wash your hands
- Avoid touching your face with unclean hands
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surface

- Avoid close contact with people - keep 2 metres (6.5 feet) between you and others
- Avoid crowded spaces, especially indoors.
- Avoid contact with anyone who is ill with a cough or difficulty breathing
- Avoid unessential travel, follow travel advice from the Department of Foreign Affairs.

- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.
- Do not share objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups.
- Do not shake hands.

Everyone has been asked to **avoid unessential travel** and to distance themselves from one another to slow the spread of the virus. This is called **social distancing**.

It means keeping a space of 2 metres (6.5 feet) between you and other people. Do not shake hands or make close contact if possible.

This applies to you and your family also. But there are **extra steps** you should take to protect yourself.

Extra Steps

Whatever your age, follow these extra steps if you are being treated for cancer. During this time, you want to reduce the chance of coming into contact with someone with coronavirus.

These extra steps are also important for people over 75 years of age and those with a chronic illness, like heart or lung disease.

Do

- ✓ Tell visitors not to call if they have any symptoms of coronavirus.
- ✓ Meet people in a well-ventilated room or outdoors.
- ✓ Ask visitors to wash their hands properly.
- ✓ Ask visitors to keep a space of at least 2 metres (6.5 feet) between you and them.
- ✓ Make a joint plan with family, friends and neighbours for the support you need now, or if you become unwell.
- ✓ Refill your prescription medications and have over-the-counter medicines and supplies, for example, tissues and a thermometer
- ✓ Keep physically active, if possible.

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Don't

- ✗ Do not have any more than 2 visitors at a time to your home.
- ✗ Do not shake hands with visitors.
- ✗ Do not isolate yourself from friends and family.

Everyone want you to keep well. So take people up on offers of help. And remind them of the extra steps you need to follow. Share this guide with them to help explain.

It can be difficult for cancer patients living with uncertainty over recent days. For advice see [“Help to cope with coronavirus worry when you’re living with cancer”](#)

Stay up to date, check the www.hse.ie - [HSE coronavirus page](#)