

Advice on Coronavirus (COVID-19) if you have had cancer

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus. We are still learning how it works.

If you are concerned about symptoms of coronavirus (cough, shortness of breath, breathing difficulties or high temperature), phone your doctor.

There are some groups of people who may be more at risk of serious illness, including cancer patients who are on treatment which weakens their immune system, if they catch coronavirus. But we do not think these groups have a higher risk of catching coronavirus.

The risk of serious illness also increases with age or if you have a long term health condition, such as heart disease or lung disease.

Reduce your risk

- 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.

You and your family/carers should take extra care to protect yourself from coronavirus.

Follow the extra steps on the next page, if you are at higher risk of serious illness from coronavirus.

Extra Steps

There are extra steps you should take, if you are at a higher risk of serious illness. This applies to you if you are over 75 years of age OR have a weakened immune system as you are on cancer treatment OR you have a chronic health condition, such as heart disease or lung disease.

During this time, you want to reduce the chance of coming into contact with someone with coronavirus.

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](#)