

## Advice on Coronavirus (COVID-19) for volunteers who work with people with cancer

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

There are some groups of people who may be more at risk of serious illness if they catch coronavirus. The risk increases with age and if you have a chronic illness, such as heart disease or lung disease. But we do not think these groups have a higher risk of catching coronavirus.

You should not volunteer with cancer patients if:

- You have any symptoms of possible coronavirus, such as cough or fever (phone your GP)
- In the last 14 days, you have been in contact with someone with coronavirus. You will need to restrict your movements until the 14 days are up.
- You have been to any country outside the island of Ireland in the last 14 days. You will need to restrict your movements until the 14 days are up.

This advice is particularly important for volunteers working with cancer patients currently on treatment, as their immune system may be weakened, making it harder for them to fight infection.

Follow these steps to protect yourself from coronavirus and to help slow the spread of the virus:

- 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

## Protecting the person you are caring for

The most important steps you can take are those above. Reducing your own risk of getting the virus will reduce your chances of passing it on to someone else.

Follow this advice as strictly as possible and encourage others to follow this advice too.

Extra steps are needed to protect those currently on cancer treatment, over 75 years of age or with a chronic health condition. It is really important to reduce their chances of coming into contact with someone with coronavirus.

This is what you can do to protect and support them:

### Do

- ✓ Coordinate with others to limit the number of visitors
- ✓ Meet in a well-ventilated room or outdoors
- ✓ Wash your hands properly and often.
- ✓ Keep a space of at least 2 metres (6.5 feet) between you
- ✓ Refill their prescription medications and check they have over-the-counter medicines and supplies, for example, tissues and a thermometer.
- ✓ Think of different ways that you can offer support, such as by phone or dropping off groceries

### Don't

- ✗ Do not allow more than 2 visitors at a time.
- ✗ Do not shake hands
- ✗ Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- ✗ **Do not volunteer to help if you have any symptoms of coronavirus or you have been asked to restrict your movements for 14 days**

It can be a difficult time for people living with cancer. For advice see "[Help to cope with coronavirus worry when you're living with cancer](#)"

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