

Information and support regarding cancer and COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Cancer Council understands that Australians undergoing cancer treatment, cancer survivors and their families and friends may have questions in relation to the recent outbreak of COVID-19.

If you have cancer your immune system may not be as strong as it is normally so you may feel concerned about the risks associated with the spread of COVID-19 within Australia.

Generally, people with cancer should continue to follow any specific advice or standard precautions recommended by their health care practitioners to minimise your risk of infection, during and after treatment.

If you are currently experiencing symptoms of infection (e.g. fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath) or are aware you have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 please contact your treatment team. Where possible obtain advice over the phone rather than attending in person to lower your risk of exposure and to reduce the risk of exposing others.

If you are currently undergoing treatment some practical ways to limit your risks of exposure include:

- Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, or if not immediately available use an alcohol-based hand rub. It's a good idea to carry this with you
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands as this can transfer the virus from surfaces
- Avoid contact with those who are sick or unwell or have been exposed to the virus.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as your mobile phone or eating surfaces
- Avoid crowds and crowded areas particularly when you are having chemotherapy and avoid unnecessary physical contact, such as shaking hands, hugging or kissing
- Maintain social distancing outside of the home environment by leaving at least one metre distance between yourself and other people
- Talk to your doctor or member of your treatment team about the times in your treatment when you may be at the highest risk of infection so you can plan your activities accordingly (Unfortunately there are no shortcuts to boosting the immune system beyond adhering to a healthy lifestyle)
- Call your treatment team to see if you can do some of your consultations remotely via phone, Skype or Facetime

If you are feeling anxious, have questions or need support, please remember that Cancer Council's support and information line is available on 13 11 20 during business hours. Our specially trained team can provide emotional support as well as practical tips for minimising the risk of infection during this time.

Where can I get further information?

The Australian Government Department of Health has issued public health information on COVID-19 at <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov>.

You can also contact the Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080

Or call Cancer Council on 13 11 20 for any other cancer-related information and support