

Important COVID-19 Information

Physical Distancing and Other Illness Prevention Strategies

➡ **It's very important as a cancer patient that you understand you are uniquely vulnerable to severe complications from COVID-19 infection. It is critical that you follow these prescribed precautions and those of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to avoid any impact to your cancer care. If you are infected with COVID-19, this may affect the type of treatment and/or the timing of when your treatment can begin. It is also important for those that you have close contact with, especially those living in your home, that they follow similar precautions to help protect your health.**

At this time, no vaccine is available to protect against COVID-19. Because this virus is thought to be spread person-to-person through respiratory droplets from sneezing and coughing, the best way to prevent it is to avoid being exposed to it. The following strategies are necessary for this contagious virus, and it will take each of us, doing our part, to help reduce the spread and keep those around us safe.

Be Aware of Vulnerable Populations

These prevention strategies are especially important for certain populations, such as those who identify with the following factors:

- Increased Age
- Cancer Patients
- COPD/Smoking
- Cardiovascular Disease
- Diabetes
- Hypertension

People with immune-suppressive medication routines related to cancer, chronic kidney disease, diabetes and organ transplantation are thought to be at increased risk. Additionally, these conditions likely increase the risk: autoimmune conditions, particularly those on biological treatments, such as rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease (Ulcerative Colitis and Crohn's disease), lupus and scleroderma.

Good Hygiene

1. Wash your hands often
2. Cough and sneeze into a tissue or your elbow
3. Don't touch your face
4. Stay home as much as possible
5. Maintain at least six feet from other people

Make a Plan for Illness

Most people infected with COVID-19 will experience mild symptoms similar to a common cold that do not require care from a physician, but having a plan in place is recommended to protect others in your home.

- Choose an area within your home where the affected person can self-isolate.
- Determine who will care for that person. CDC guidelines discuss caring for a loved one with suspected COVID-19.
- Call the affected person's healthcare provider before seeking care.
- If leaving the home for a medical appointment, avoid public transportation.

Seek Medical Attention Immediately/Call 911 if these Symptoms Occur:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- Confusion
- Not able to be aroused
- Bluish lips or face

Physical Distancing

One of the most important forms of prevention is physical distancing, which is intentionally increasing the physical space between people to avoid spreading illness.

- Avoid close contact with other people. Keep at least six feet between you and another person.
- Stay home. Only go out when absolutely necessary, such as for food, medications or to seek medical care. Instead, ask for and accept help from others who can bring groceries or other necessary supplies and drop them off outside your door.
- Take advantage of delivery services from your local pharmacist or grocery stores. If you must go to the store or pharmacy, shop at off-peak hours, don't touch your face and wash your hands frequently and as soon as you return home. Take advantage of special times set aside for senior citizens or others needing assistance, if that applies to you.
- Do not shake hands. Instead, greet people with a smile, nod or a wave.
- Limit your interactions with groups of people. Do not gather with people who live outside of your home. Instead, meet virtually by phone, conference call, video conference or another social media tool.

➡ Key Points to Remember:



1 Wash your hands often



2 Cough and sneeze into a tissue or your elbow



3 Don't touch your face



4 Stay home if you can



5 Maintain at least six feet from other people

Leaving Your Home

Only leave your home for essential needs, such as work, urgent medical appointments, getting food, prescriptions and supplies, and exercising, and always practice physical distancing:

- Avoid public transportation, if possible.
- Wear at least a non-medical/cloth mask each time you leave home. A face mask can help protect as well as keep you from touching your face.
- Carry antiviral hand sanitizer with you, and use it often.
- Do not touch shared surfaces. If you do, wash your hands.
- At any retail store, wipe down the cart with hand sanitizer or wipes. Only touch items you purchase. Ask the sales clerk to sanitize their hands before double-bagging your items and exchanging payment. Pay using credit cards or online options and avoid cash, if possible.
- Do not travel. Follow the travel precautions and recommendations provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (cdc.gov).

Returning to Your Home

Do the following before re-entering your home:

- Leave shoes outside or in the garage, or spray them with a disinfectant.
- Take off the outer layer of your clothes if you have been to a busy place such as a doctor's office, grocery store or pharmacy.
- Leave all outer bags outside or in your garage.
- If the contents of the package are likely to have been touched by others, disinfect the contents.
- For fresh fruit and vegetables, wash them immediately in hot soapy water. For prepared hot foods that are ready to be eaten, put them in a microwave or oven to increase the heat.
- If you wear gloves, throw them away and wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Disinfect your doorknob, door handle or other items touched when you return home.
- Handle dirty laundry and shoes carefully. Use rubber gloves and a disposable bag or washable laundry bag to transport dirty laundry to the washing machine and launder according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely. If gloves aren't available, wash hands thoroughly after handling laundry.
- Use disinfectant wipes on any items you used while out, such as your cell phone, keys, credit cards, wallet, etc.
- Wash hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, and consider showering.

Proper Mask Wearing

If you wear a mask, follow these guidelines:

- Wash your hands or use alcohol-based sanitizer before you put on a mask and after removing it.
- Cover mouth and nose with mask and ensure no gaps exist between your face and the mask.
- Avoid touching the mask while wearing. If you do, clean your hands immediately.
- For surgical masks, throw each mask away after one use.

Cloth/non-medical masks:

Follow instructions above as well as these:

- Carefully remove the mask touching only ear loops or ties in the back.
- Wash and dry your cloth masks using standard detergent and settings before re-wearing.
- When at a medical appointment, the cloth mask will be worn only in non-patient care areas.
- Donated non-medical masks may be available from your cancer care provider.

Practice Good Hygiene

Adopt these habits now:

- Wash your hands well and often. Use soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose or being in a public place. Refer to the hand washing instructions in this guide for specific instructions.
- Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Ensure your hand sanitizer contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub together for at least 20 seconds until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. If you must, be sure your hands are clean.
- Follow proper sneeze and cough etiquette. Cover your nose and mouth with a disposable tissue when you sneeze or cough. Throw away your tissue in a closed trash container, then wash hands well or use hand sanitizer. If a tissue is not available, sneeze or cough into your elbow. Never sneeze or cough into your hand.

Clean and Disinfect

Keep all cleaners out of reach of children:

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces regularly. This includes doorknobs, light switches, countertops, tables, cabinet knobs, phones, computers, toilets, faucets and sinks.
- Clean dirty surfaces with soap and water or detergent before disinfecting.
- Use disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting, and discard after each cleaning.
- To disinfect, use diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol or an EPA-registered household disinfectant.
- Prepare a bleach solution by mixing the following: 1/3 cup (5 tablespoons) bleach per gallon of water or 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water. Put it in a spray bottle and label it. Do not use the bottle for anything else.
- Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.
- Wash clothes frequently, and bedding and towels at least once a week.

Stock Up on Essentials

'Essential' means something you absolutely need.

- Contact your pharmacy and order a two-month supply of prescription medications; request home delivery, if available.
- Have supplies available if you become sick, such as fever reducers, cold medications, electrolyte replacements, etc.
- Think ahead about ordering other essential items that you may not be able to get quickly in case of shortages and delivery delays.

Limit Visitors

Only essential visitors should come into your home. Do not allow anyone who has symptoms or believes they may have been infected to come in. If visitors must come in, require them to do the following:

- Leave their shoes and outer layer outside.
- Sanitize their hands and, if available, wear gloves and a mask that they will take with them when they leave.
- After they leave, sanitize any surfaces they have touched, and wash your hands.

Handle Home Deliveries Appropriately

Take these precautions when items are delivered to your home:

- Request all deliveries (food, prescriptions, toiletries) be dropped off outside your door, without any contact with the delivery person, family member or friend.
- Wear disposable gloves and disinfect the outer packaging before opening it.
- Leave all outer packaging outside or in your garage.
- If the contents of the package are likely to have been touched by others, disinfect the contents.
- For fresh fruit and vegetables, wash them immediately in hot soapy water. For prepared hot foods that are ready to be eaten, put them in a microwave or oven to increase the heat.
- Throw away your gloves and wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Disinfect your doorknob, door handle, doorbell, etc.

Stay in Touch to Boost Mental Health

We thrive on human contact. It's incredibly important for our emotional health.

- Check in with family, friends and coworkers via phone calls and group conversation apps.
- Write letters and send cards.
- Post photos and updates on social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.).
- Host virtual happy hours, birthday celebrations and visits with FaceTime, Zoom, etc.