Questions to Ask Your Health Care Team About Coronavirus

The current coronavirus outbreak is very scary and concerning for many people. The American Cancer Society understands how stressful this time can be for people with cancer and their families and caregivers.

Where to find answers

You can find updated information and answers from the American Cancer Society about the coronavirus, COVID-19, and cancer, including:

- Where to find resources to help answer common questions people have about coronavirus and COVID-19
- Why infections in people with cancer can be a concern
- Ways to manage stress and emotions during this time
- Tips for staying healthy while stuck at home
- How telehealth (telemedicine) might be a way to get medical attention
- Hints to help caregivers who have coronavirus concerns

You probably have some questions that you haven’t found answers to about how coronavirus might affect you. This is because each person’s cancer, treatment, and situation can be different, so the answers are not the same for everyone. There are many questions you might need to ask your health care team to get the answers you need.

What to ask your health care team
Here are some questions people with cancer might want to ask their health care team about coronavirus.

For all people with cancer or a history of cancer, and people facing a possible cancer diagnosis:

- In my situation, how can I prevent getting coronavirus?
- Am I at higher risk of getting coronavirus or COVID-19? Why or why not?
- Is there a specific type of doctor I should be asking to see now?
- What symptoms of COVID-19 should I watch for?
- What should I do if I have symptoms of COVID-19?
- If I get tested and I’m positive for coronavirus, what will happen?
- If I get sick from COVID-19, will it affect the outlook or prognosis of my cancer?
- If I get tested and I’m negative for coronavirus, what should I do if I still don’t feel well?
- If I get tested and I’m negative for coronavirus, can I still get infected later on?
- Will this outbreak or my coronavirus test result delay or affect my care in any way?
- Is telehealth available so I get care virtually or be seen by a doctor over the internet?

For people getting ready to have exams, tests, or surgery for cancer:

- Will having this procedure put me at a higher risk of getting coronavirus or COVID-19? Why or why not?
- Is it necessary for me to have the procedure now or is it safe to wait?
- Do you think I should delay this procedure? If so, for how long?
- Is there a chance the hospital or facility will cancel my procedure? What are my options if it’s canceled? Can I have the procedure somewhere else?
- Can I bring a family member or friend with me? Can people visit me? Can I visit other people?
- Is telehealth available so I get care virtually or be seen by a doctor over the internet?
- Will this outbreak delay any results from the procedure?

For people getting ready to start cancer treatment:
Will treatment put me at a higher risk of getting coronavirus or COVID-19? Why or why not?
Is there a chance I can be exposed to coronavirus when I come in for treatment?
Is it necessary to start treatment now or is it safe to wait? How long is OK to wait?
Do you think I should delay starting treatment?
Is there a chance the treatment center will cancel my scheduled treatment? What are my options if it’s canceled? Is there another treatment center where I can get treatment?
Can I bring a family member or friend with me to treatment?
Can I go to work? Should my caregiver go to work?
Can I visit friends? Can friends and relatives visit me?
Are there special precautions I should take after treatment begins?
Is telehealth available so I get care virtually or be seen by a doctor over the internet?
Can I get care, treatment, or bloodwork at home?

For people currently getting cancer treatment:

Does my treatment put me at higher risk of getting coronavirus or COVID-19? Why or why not?
Is there a chance I will be exposed to coronavirus when I come in for treatment?
If I get sick from COVID-19, how will my cancer treatment be affected?
Do I need to wear a mask or gloves at home when I’m around my family and other people?
How much do I need to stay at home? Can I run errands like going to the store?
Can I go to work? Should my caregiver go to work?
Can I visit friends? Can friends and relatives visit me?
Should I take my treatment now? Will it put me more at risk?
Are there medicines I can take during treatment to lessen my risk?
Do you think I should delay my treatment? If so, for how long?
What precautions do I need to take when I come in for treatment or check-ups?
Can I bring a family member or friend with me to treatment or check-ups?
Should I continue treatment or keep my appointments if I have symptoms of COVID-19?
Will I need to be seen more frequently now?
Will I need to have more frequent labs or exams now?
Is there a chance the treatment center will cancel my scheduled treatment? What
are my options if it’s canceled? Is there another treatment center where I can get treatment?
• Can I get care, treatment, or bloodwork at home?
• Is telehealth available so I get care virtually or be seen by a doctor over the internet?
• If I miss a treatment, what will happen? Are there other treatment options?

For people who are not currently getting treatment or who have finished treatment:

• Am I still at higher risk of getting coronavirus or COVID-19? Why or why not?
• If I get sick from COVID-19, will it affect the outlook or prognosis of my cancer?
• Are there special precautions I should be taking? If so, for how long?
• How much do I need to stay at home? Can I run errands like going to the store?
• Can I go to work? Should my caregiver go to work?
• Can I wait to come for follow-up tests or appointments until a later time?
• Is there a chance I can be exposed to coronavirus if I come for follow-up tests or appointments?
• Do you think I should I delay my upcoming check-up, follow-up test, or cancer screening?
• Is there a chance my upcoming check-up, follow-up test, or cancer screening will be canceled? What will happen if it’s canceled? Can I get it somewhere else?
• Can I reschedule a check-up, follow-up test, or cancer screening? If so, when should I reschedule it?
• Is telehealth available so I get care virtually or be seen by a doctor over the internet?
• Will this outbreak delay any test results?

Hyperlinks


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Written by

The American Cancer Society medical and editorial content team (www.cancer.org/cancer/acs-medical-content-and-news-staff.html)

Our team is made up of doctors and oncology certified nurses with deep knowledge of cancer care as well as journalists, editors, and translators with extensive experience in medical writing.

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