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Questions to Ask Your Health Care Team About COVID-19

The current COVID-19 pandemic has been very concerning for many people, especially for people with cancer, cancer survivors, and their families and caregivers.

Where to find answers

You can find updated information and answers from the American Cancer Society about [COVID-19 and cancer](#)¹, including:

- Answers to [common questions people have about COVID-19](#)²
- Why [infections in people with cancer](#)³ can be a concern
- If [people with cancer should get the COVID-19 vaccine](#)⁴
- Ways to [manage stress and emotions](#)⁵ during this time
- Tips for [staying healthy while stuck at home](#)⁶
- How [telehealth \(telemedicine\)](#)⁷ might be a way to get medical care
- Hints to help [caregivers who have COVID-19 concerns](#)⁸

You may have questions that you haven't found answers to about how COVID-19 might affect you. Each person's cancer, treatment, and situation can be different, so the answers might not be the same for everyone. There are many questions you might need to ask your health care team to get the answers you're looking for.

What to ask your health care team

Here are some questions people with cancer or cancer survivors might want to ask their

health care team about COVID-19.

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

- In my situation, how can I lower my risk of getting COVID-19?
- Am I at higher risk of serious illness if I do get COVID-19? Why or why not?
- Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for me?
- Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine now, or should I wait?
- Should I get any additional COVID-19 vaccine shots and/or boosters? If so, when?
- Do I still need to take steps to lower my risk of getting COVID even if I've had the vaccine? If so, what would these be?
- What symptoms of COVID-19 should I watch for?
- What should I do if I have symptoms of COVID-19?
- Should I get tested for COVID-19?
- If I test positive for COVID-19, what will happen?
- If I get sick from COVID-19, will it affect the outlook (prognosis) of my cancer?
- If I test negative for COVID-19, what should I do if I still don't feel well?
- If I test negative for COVID-19, can I still get infected later?
- Will this pandemic delay or affect my care in any way?
- Is telehealth available so I can get care virtually or be seen by a doctor online?

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

- Will having this procedure put me at a higher risk of getting COVID-19? Why or why not?
- Will having this procedure put me at higher risk of serious illness if I do get COVID? Why or why not?
- Do I need to have the procedure now, or could we safely delay it? 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?
- Do I need a COVID-19 test before I can get my procedure?
- Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine before my procedure is done?
- Should I get any additional COVID-19 vaccine shots and/or boosters? If so, when?
- Do I still need to take steps to lower my risk of getting COVID even if I've had the vaccine? If so, what would these be?

- Can I bring a family member or friend with me? Can people visit me?
- Is telehealth available so I can get care virtually or be seen by a doctor online?
- Will the pandemic delay getting any results from the procedure?

For people getting ready to start cancer treatment:

- Will my treatment put me at a higher risk of getting COVID-19? Why or why not?
- Will my treatment put me at higher risk of serious illness if I do get COVID? Why or why not?
- Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine before I start treatment?
- Could the treatment alter how well the vaccine works for me?
- Should I get any additional COVID-19 vaccine shots and/or boosters? If so, when?
- Do I still need to take steps to lower my risk of getting COVID even if I've had the vaccine? If so, what would these be?
- Do I need to start treatment now, or is it safe to wait? How long is it OK to wait?
- Is there a chance the treatment center will cancel my scheduled treatment? What are my options if it's canceled? Is there another center where I can get treatment?
- Can I bring a family member or friend with me to treatment?
- Can I go to work?
- What about people who will be taking care of me? Should they get the COVID vaccine and/or take other steps to lower their risk? Can they go to work?
- Can I visit friends and relatives? Can they visit me?
- Are there any special precautions I should take after treatment begins?
- Is telehealth available so I can get care virtually or be seen by a doctor online?
- 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 COVID-19? Why or why not?
- Does the treatment put me at higher risk of serious illness if I do get COVID? Why or why not?
- Can I get the COVID-19 vaccine while I am getting treatment?
- Could the treatment alter how well the vaccine works for me?
- Should I get any additional COVID-19 vaccine shots and/or boosters? If so, when?
- Do I still need to take steps to lower my risk of getting COVID even if I've had the vaccine? If so, what would these be?

- If I get sick or have to go to the hospital from COVID-19, how might my cancer treatment be affected?
- Do I need to wear a mask 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?
- What about people who are taking care of me? Should they get the COVID vaccine and/or take other steps to lower their risk? Can they go to work?
- Can I visit friends and relatives? Can they visit me? if so, how can we do it safely?
- Do I need a COVID-19 test before I can get each treatment?
- Are there medicines I can take during treatment to lessen my risk of getting COVID, or of getting seriously ill from COVID?
- 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?
- Is there a chance the treatment center will cancel my scheduled treatment? What are my options if it's canceled? Is there another center where I can get treatment?
- Can I get care, treatment, or bloodwork at home?
- Is telehealth available so I can get care virtually or be seen by a doctor online?
- What might happen if I miss a treatment?

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

- Am I at higher risk of getting COVID-19? Why or why not?
- Am I at higher risk of serious illness if I do get COVID? Why or why not?
- If I get sick from COVID-19, could it affect the outlook (prognosis) of my cancer?
- Should I get the COVID-19 vaccine? Is the COVID-19 vaccine safe for people who have finished cancer treatment?
- Will the cancer or the treatment(s) I've had affect how well the vaccine works for me?
- Should I get any additional COVID-19 vaccine shots and/or boosters? If so, when?
- Do I still need to take steps to lower my risk of getting COVID even if I've had the vaccine? If so, what would these be?
- How much do I need to stay at home? Can I run errands like going to the store?
- Can I go to work?
- What about people who are taking care of me? Should they get the COVID vaccine

- or take other steps to lower their risk? Can they go to work?
- Can I wait to go in for follow-up tests or appointments until a later time?
 - Should I delay my upcoming check-up or follow-up test?
 - Is there a chance my upcoming check-up or follow-up test will be canceled? What will happen if it's canceled? Can I reschedule it or get it somewhere else?
 - Is telehealth available so I can get care virtually or be seen by a doctor online?
 - Will the pandemic delay any test results?

Hyperlinks

1. www.cancer.org/about-us/what-we-do/coronavirus-covid-19-and-cancer.html
2. www.cancer.org/latest-news/common-questions-about-the-new-coronavirus-outbreak.html
3. www.cancer.org/treatment/treatments-and-side-effects/physical-side-effects/low-blood-counts/infections.html
4. www.cancer.org/treatment/treatments-and-side-effects/physical-side-effects/low-blood-counts/infections/covid-19-vaccines-in-people-with-cancer.html
5. www.cancer.org/latest-news/nurture-your-emotional-health.html
6. www.cancer.org/latest-news/tips-for-staying-healthy-while-stuck-at-home.html
7. www.cancer.org/latest-news/medicare-expands-telehealth-to-help-seniors-stay-home.html
8. www.cancer.org/latest-news/cancer-caregiving-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak.html

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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)

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