Q: Can I receive the COVID-19 vaccine during active cancer treatment?
A: Both the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and the American Society of Hematology (ASH) endorse the use of the vaccine in almost all circumstances, unless:
- You are not eligible due to responses on the COVID-19 questionnaire.
- Your physician specifically identifies you as someone who should not receive the vaccine.
- You expect to receive a stem cell transplant in the next seven to 10 days.

Q: How do I protect myself from getting COVID-19?
A: The best way to prevent the spread of germs is through proper hand hygiene and cough etiquette. Below are some other tips:
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Please practice social distancing (maintain 6 ft. distance) to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and perform hand hygiene immediately.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

Q: What are the symptoms of COVID-19?
A: Similar to many viral respiratory illnesses, the symptoms of COVID-19 mimic the common cold and include mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough and difficulty breathing. Symptoms may appear between two to 14 days after exposure to the virus. Also be mindful that we are in flu season and pollen counts are high, so there are many other causes for upper respiratory symptoms that are much more common than COVID-19.

Q: How do I know if I should be tested for COVID-19?
A: As a general rule, if individuals have a cough or fever, or exposure to someone with COVID-19, they should contact their primary care doctor's offices to ask questions. Houston Methodist patients needing a COVID-19 test (or a retest) must have an order from their primary care doctor as well as a scheduled appointment. Please talk to your doctor about scheduling a test. If you don't have a primary care doctor, you may find a doctor at houstonmethodist.org/find-a-doctor or use Houston Methodist Virtual Urgent Care in the MyMethodist app to be screened by our board-certified providers, who will be able to help you determine if testing is needed and advise you on where you should go.

Q: Are cancer patients more at risk for contracting the COVID-19 virus?
A: Everybody is at risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus. Patients currently undergoing chemotherapy treatments, older cancer patients, and adult patients with other chronic health problems, such as lung diseases, are at a higher risk of developing more severe complications from this virus if they catch it.

Q: Can cancer patients and survivors get tested to see if they're immunosuppressed?
A: There is no recommendation to test whether or not an individual is immunosuppressed. All patients are encouraged to take the recommended precautions to avoid exposure to the virus.
Q: Should patients cancel their treatment or follow-up appointments?
A: Patients should contact their doctor to discuss treatment plans and follow-up appointments. Every situation is different. Decisions about whether to reschedule your care should be made in consultation with your care team.

Q: Will I be screened before entering the Cancer Center?
A: Yes, you will be screened at the entrance to the hospital or medical office building. We will ask you a series of questions about symptoms, take your temperature and ask you to wear a wristband. The facility is currently screening everyone for respiratory symptoms. Everyone is required to wear a mask, which decreases the spread of viruses and bacteria. You may be rescreened at registration upon check-in to the department.

Q: What is the Cancer Center doing to protect patients?
A: We want to reassure you that we are taking extra precautions to protect the safety of our patients, staff and community, including asking patients to arrive no more than 15 minutes before their appointment to promote social distancing and screening patients upon arrival to campus. We also screen all staff and physicians daily and staff will be wearing masks. We are also limiting the seating in our family rooms to help ensure social distancing.

Q: What is the visitor policy at the Houston Methodist Cancer Center?
A: For everyone’s safety, Houston Methodist campuses will no longer permit visitors unless the patient is disabled. We are doing this to protect our patients, visitors, employees and physicians as we expect to see more COVID-19 positive patients. In the Cancer Center, we realize that some patients may be weak and unable to drive, or may be on medications that can cause drowsiness. If that is the case, we allow you to bring one essential, healthy person who is over the age of 18 with you, but we may ask your visitor to wait in the car or come back to pick you up at discharge.

Q: Are telemedicine services available?
A: For your safety, many of our oncologists are conducting MyChart video visits, unless there is a need for a physical exam or testing in the clinic. If you already have an appointment scheduled, our staff may reach out to you to convert your appointment to a video visit, if appropriate, and will walk you through this process. Please contact your physician with any questions.

Q: What is monoclonal antibody therapy?
A: The FDA recently approved the emergency use authorization for a therapy consisting of monoclonal antibody (mAB) for the treatment of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Monoclonal antibody therapy is an investigational medicine used for the treatment of COVID-19 in nonhospitalized adults and who are at high risk for developing severe COVID-19 symptoms or for hospitalization. This medication may help prevent patients from requiring hospitalization, reduce viral load and minimize symptoms associated with COVID-19. Monoclonal antibody therapy is investigational because it is still being studied. There is limited information known about the safety or effectiveness of using monoclonal antibodies to treat people with COVID-19.

Q: How do I know if I qualify for monoclonal antibody therapy?
A: Please call your physician or use Houston Methodist Virtual Urgent Care. In order to receive this treatment, you must have a physician’s referral and a copy of your positive COVID-19 lab result.

For more up-to-date information please visit:

• houstonmethodist.org/coronavirus
• houstonmethodist.org/coronavirus/testing
• houstonmethodist.org/vaccine
• houstonmethodist.org/coronavirus/monoclonal-antibody-therapy