

CANCER PATIENTS

Q: How do I protect myself from getting COVID-19?

A: There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. 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: When should I be tested for COVID-19?

A: As a general rule, if an individual has a cough or fever, or exposure to someone with travel to high risk countries, they should contact their local county health department (see phone numbers below) and be screened through Houston Methodist Virtual Urgent Care in the MyMethodist app, or contact their physician's office to ask questions.

City of Houston Health Department
832.393.5080 (24 hrs.)

Harris County Health Department
713.439.6000
After hours: 713.755.5050

Fort Bend County Health Department
281.342.6414
After hours: 281.434.6494

Montgomery County Health Department
936.523.5026
After hours: 888.825.9754

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. Those with symptoms are asked 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 proactively screening patients by phone before visits, as well as in person 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: When will telemedicine services be available?

A: For your safety, many of our oncologists are already 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: How does the Stay Home, Work Safe Order affect my appointment?

A: The Stay Home, Work Safe Order will not affect your appointment at the Houston Methodist Cancer Center since you are leaving your house for an essential health care appointment.

For more up-to-date please visit the [CDC website](#).