

COVID-19 and Cancer Patients

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a new type of virus that can cause mild to severe infections in the lungs. Like other viruses, it can lead to serious infections for people with weakened immune systems. COVID-19 may cause more severe infections than other viruses. We do not have a vaccine to help control its spread, but experts are working to make a vaccine.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus can spread easily, just like the common cold or flu. It spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes droplets that can get into the eyes, nose, or mouth of people nearby. Droplets also land on surfaces that people touch before touching their own eyes, nose, or mouth.

How can I protect myself?

These are some of the best ways to protect yourself and others from the virus:

- **Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.**
- Use hand sanitizer with 60% or more alcohol until you can wash your hands with soap and water.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth without washing your hands first.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces often. Regular household wipes and sprays will kill the virus. Be sure to clean places that people touch a lot, such as door handles, phones, keyboards, and light switches.
- Avoid handshakes, hugging, and standing or sitting close to people who are coughing or sneezing.
- Be as healthy as you can. Get plenty of sleep, eat healthy, exercise, and manage your stress.

If you are sick, follow these steps:

- Stay home.
- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze. If you use a tissue, put it in the garbage right away. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow crease.
- Call before going to your medical appointments. Let them know about recent travel or if you have had contact with a person with COVID-19.

What should I do if I have cancer?

Some people with cancer might have a higher risk of getting COVID-19 or having a serious infection from it. Do your best to follow the steps listed above to protect yourself. Ask your doctor or nurse if they have special recommendations based on your health or type of treatment.

Call your doctor right away if any of these happen to you:

- You have a fever higher than 100.3 degrees F.
- You feel short of breath.
- You develop a cough, runny nose, or congestion.

Call **801-587-7000** anytime—day, night, or weekend.

Should I wear a mask?

Experts don't believe that wearing a mask is helpful for the general public. Some people should use certain types of masks because of their own health or the type of work they do. Talk to your doctor or nurse to see if you would benefit from wearing a mask. If you arrive at the hospital with respiratory symptoms, please ask for a mask.

What if I care for or live with a cancer patient?

If you are caring for or living with someone with cancer, do your best to keep them from getting the virus. Follow the steps to protect yourself listed on this sheet.

If you become sick yourself, call your doctor to see what more you should do to protect your loved one.

What about people visiting?

If you are sick or have been exposed to COVID-19, we ask that you not come to Huntsman Cancer Institute. We ask that you find someone who isn't sick to join your loved one at their appointments.

To protect all patients, we may limit the number of people who can visit someone staying in the hospital. Please check with your care team.

How will Huntsman Cancer Institute protect me from getting COVID-19?

Our hospital and clinics are taking steps to keep infected patients separate from those who may be at risk. At every appointment, your care team will ask questions about overall health and recent travel. We may ask some patients to wait in a separate room or to reschedule until they are feeling better if they have symptoms.

We are also taking extra steps to clean and disinfect surfaces throughout our hospital and clinics. We provide "sanitation stations" at all entrances. These stations have tissues, hand sanitizer, and directions about how to get a mask.

Will you still care for me if I get sick?

Yes. Your care is our top priority. Although we may change some ways we care for you, we will never put your care or health at risk.

For the most up-to-date information, visit healthcare.utah.edu/coronavirus.