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COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

For Colorectal Cancer Patients

COVID-19 Basic FAQs

What is COVID-19 (or novel Coronavirus)?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which can cause illnesses in humans and animals. Coronaviruses can cause illnesses that range in severity from the common cold, to more severe diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and most recently, COVID-19. COVID-19 and novel coronavirus originated from an outbreak in Wuhan, China in December 2019.

Symptoms

The most common symptoms associated with COVID-19 can include fever, fatigue and a dry cough. Some patients also experience aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat or diarrhea. It is also possible to become infected with COVID-19 and not experience any symptoms or feel unwell.

Spread

COVID-19 is mainly spread through the transmission of droplets from the nose or mouth when person coughs, exhales or sneezes. These droplets land on surfaces around the person, and COVID-19 can be transmitted through others touching these surfaces, and then touching their nose, mouth or eyes. A person can also contract COVID-19 through inhaling these droplets from someone with COVID-19.

Risk

Although research is still ongoing, it is important to note that older populations (over the age of 65), those with a compromised immune system and those with pre-existing conditions including heart disease, high blood pressure, lung disease, diabetes or cancer may be at a higher risk of severe illness due to COVID-19.

Source: <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>

Prevention FAQs

What can I do to avoid getting Coronavirus?

There are various ways in which we can reduce our risk of contracting COVID-19. Below are some measures suggested by the World Health Organization

1. Keep at least 1 metre (or 3 feet) in between yourself and other people. This will reduce the risk of inhaling droplets from those infected with COVID-19.
2. Regularly clean your hands with warm water and soap, or an alcohol-based hand rub. This will kill any viruses on your hands.
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. If the virus is on your hands, it can enter the body through these areas.
4. Follow good respiratory hygiene by covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or elbow when you cough and sneeze. This prevents the droplets from settling on surfaces or being released into the air around you.
5. Stay home as much as possible, especially if you are feeling unwell. If you think you may have the Coronavirus, please see “What should I do if I think I have Coronavirus?” section.

Source: <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>

Treatment FAQs

Are there any treatments available for Coronavirus?

People with cancer are at a higher risk of severe illness due to COVID-19 as cancer is considered a pre-existing health issue. Some cancer treatments including chemotherapy, radiation and surgery can weaken the immune system, making it harder for the body to fight infections and viruses, such as Coronavirus. It is important to diligently follow the World Health Organization's recommendations above to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19. If you have any concerns about your risk, it is best to contact your doctor or healthcare team.

Source: <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>

Cancer and COVID-19 FAQs

Are there special precautions that people with cancer can take?

People with cancer are at a higher risk of severe illness due to COVID-19 as cancer is considered a pre-existing health issue. Some cancer treatments including chemotherapy, radiation and surgery can weaken the immune system, making it harder for the body to fight infections and viruses, such as Coronavirus. It is important to diligently follow the World Health Organization's recommendations above to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19. If you have any concerns about your risk, it is best to contact your doctor or healthcare team.

Will anything change with regards to my cancer related medical visits?

As each patient and treatment plan is unique, it is always best to contact your health care provider for updated information about your treatment plan. In some cases, it is safe to delay cancer treatment until after the pandemic risk has decreased. In other cases, it may be safe to attend a clinic that is separate from where COVID-19 patients are being treated. Oral treatment options could be prescribed by your care provider virtually, without the need to attend the clinic. Finally, some follow-up appointments or discussions could be held virtually or over the phone to minimize your risk. As we know, conditions and protocols are changing daily due to the nature of the COVID-19 outbreak, and vary based on location, therefore the best first step is to reach out to your care provider for guidance.

Source: <https://www.cancer.gov/contact/emergency-preparedness/coronavirus>

Contact for Coronavirus by Province

What should I do if I think I have COVID-19?

If you think you have Coronavirus, please visit the Public Health Agency of Canada's online self-assessment tool. If you think that you require medical attention, please contact the appropriate resource in your province, shown below.

Province	Contact Information
Alberta Health Link	811
HealthLink BC	811
Manitoba Health Link	1-888-315-9257
New Brunswick Tele-Care	811
Newfoundland and Labrador Healthline	811 or 1-888-709-2929
Northwest Territories	Contact your local healthcare provider.
Nova Scotia 811	811
Nunavut Department of Health	1-867-975-5772
Telehealth Ontario	1-866-797-0000
Prince Edward Island 811 Telehealth	811
Quebec	1-877-644-4545
Saskatchewan HealthLine	811
Yukon HealthLine	811