



Coronavirus and cancer

An information sheet for patients, carers, and the community

Australians impacted by cancer are often at higher risk of infections, influenza, and viruses, and any infections are more likely to take hold at a greater speed.

Having a **personal infection prevention plan** is essential.

Follow these steps to minimise potential exposure and reduce your risks:

1. Always wash your hands well with soap or alcohol-based handwashes, especially before and after being in contact with other people, before eating or touching your face, and whenever you touch high-contact objects, such as handrails.
2. Be more careful about close contact with others and practice safe physical distance – stay home and maintain a safe distance in your home as far as practicable.
3. If you have to buy groceries or medicine, try to avoid contact with other people.
4. Ensure your friends, family, and social networks are aware of your vulnerability to infection, and respectfully ask them to avoid contact and home visits, especially if they have any symptoms of potential illness, such as a high temperature, cough, sneezing, or headache, etc.
5. Absolutely avoid contact with people who have been in countries or areas where the virus is in circulation.

What to do if you develop signs of infection

Contact your treatment team immediately or phone to seek the advice of your GP or health authority. Call in advance to request medical advice and urgent treatment if you experience signs of fever, chills, sinus pain, headache, shortness of breath, or any other suspicious symptoms. If you experience a medical event or notice new symptoms associated with your diagnosis, contact your treatment team or call ahead and go to your GP, taking care to minimise exposure to others, particularly those who may be presenting to hospital with symptoms. If you are undergoing outpatient treatment for cancer and face an immediate emergency you should try to call your Emergency Department before arrival, to ensure a quarantined treatment protocol and minimise your exposure to other patients.

Always be prepared

Talk to your doctor/s about preventive and precautionary measures specific to your situation, and confirm the best method for contacting them or accessing medical assistance if you need it. Also seek advice about what information you'll need to provide to other doctors if you receive treatment outside your normal treatment centre. Ensure important medical documents are easy to access and carry if you are required to seek treatment in an emergency. These include medical records, contact details for your treatment team, prescription information, test results and reports, and insurance records.

Contacts

If you have questions about prostate cancer and what to do in relation to Coronavirus and other infectious illnesses, please call PCFA on [1800 22 00 99](tel:1800220099), email enquiries@pcfa.org.au or go to www.pcfa.org.au.