

People living with cancer now

Q1 Do I need to do anything differently as someone who is being treated / in remission from cancer/living with a chronic cancer?

The Government is advising that people with cancer should be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures. They are:

1. Avoid contact with someone who is displaying symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature and/or new and continuous cough;
2. Avoid non-essential use of public transport, varying your travel times to avoid rush hour, when possible;
3. Work from home, where possible. Your employer should support you to do this. Please refer to employer guidance for more information;
4. Avoid large gatherings, and gatherings in smaller public spaces such as pubs, cinemas, restaurants, theatres, bars, clubs
5. Avoid gatherings with friends and family. Keep in touch using remote technology such as phone, internet, and social media.
6. Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services.

The detailed advice can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>

Some people with cancer are more at risk of becoming seriously ill if they contract the COVID-19 infection:

- People having chemotherapy, or who have received chemotherapy in the last 3 months
- People having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer
- People having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors
- People having intensive (radical) radiotherapy for lung cancer
- People who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs
- People with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment

If you are in this category, next week the NHS in England will directly contact you with advice the more stringent measures you should take in order to keep yourself and others safe. For now, you should rigorously follow the social distancing advice in full.

Q3 What will happen to my cancer treatment? For example:

- **Will it be postponed?**
- **Should I still go to hospital appointments?**
- **How will my hospital decide whether I am a priority for treatment? Will there be national rules?**
- **If treatment, including stem cell transplants, are deferred and I begin to relapse will this limit my eligibility for future lines of treatment?**

- **Should I start chemotherapy treatment (particularly if it is a 2nd/3rd line for "mop up") or postpone?**
- **As a stage 4 patient will I be given life support if I have breathing difficulties due to the virus?**
- **If I get the virus and recover, will this affect my cancer treatment and outlook?**

Clinicians will always make decisions to prioritise treatment for those most in need and in consultation with patients.

Many hospitals have started to use more telephone consultations as a way of helping people to avoid long waits in clinics and for treatment. You may be called to arrange your treatments in this way, and planned treatments may need to be moved to help with running a smooth service.

Your clinical team are best placed to talk with you about the effect on your treatment and appointments. They will work with you to determine the best course of action in each individual situation. If you have any concerns or questions about your treatment, please speak to your clinical team.

Q3a. I am on chemotherapy. If I experience sweats/ cough/ shivering should I call NHS 111 or the chemotherapy care line?

You should call the chemotherapy care line.

Q3b. If I need to self-isolate for more than seven days, what will happen in relation to treatment that has to be done weekly?

Your clinical team are best placed to talk with you about the effect on your treatment and appointments. They will work with you to determine the best course of action in each individual situation.

There is guidance on staying at home if you or someone in your household think you have coronavirus: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Q4 What are the symptoms likely to be?/Will the symptoms be different because I have cancer?/What should I look out for?

The NHS outlines the common symptoms of coronavirus on its [website](#).

Coronavirus can have serious effects on anyone who has a long-term health condition or a weakened immune system, including some people with cancer. Follow the advice on avoiding catching or spreading germs. (see Q1).

Q4a. Can you catch this virus more than once?

It is not yet known whether reinfection is possible, although many experts think it is unlikely.

Q5 What should I do if my clinician is diagnosed with coronavirus?

also produced advice for those currently caring for others:

even under difficult circumstances. If patients order extra prescriptions, or stockpile, it will put pressure on stocks, meaning that some patients may not get the medicines or medical products they need.

For people worried they have cancer

Q14. I am