

**LAST UPDATED: Sunday, March 22, 2020**



# CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19):

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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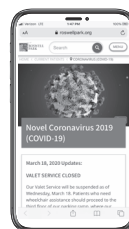
#### HOW TO SCAN A QR CODE



1. Open Camera



2. Scan Code



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COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER

[www.RoswellPark.org/Coronavirus](https://www.RoswellPark.org/Coronavirus)

# BACKGROUND

Coronaviruses are common viruses that usually cause a simple cold. Some strains of viruses can cause more severe diseases, as seen with the recent novel coronavirus disease called COVID-19. This new virus and disease were the cause of the outbreak in Wuhan, China, starting in December 2019 and now has spread to many parts of the world.

## COVID-19 Symptoms:



Fever



Cough



Shortness of breath



Other flu-like symptoms



Pneumonia in some cancer patients

Currently, there are no antivirals or vaccines effective against this virus, although studies to develop these are ongoing.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Q: Are cancer patients at higher risk for the virus?

**A:** We do not have specific information on whether COVID-19 infection will be more severe in cancer patients compared to healthy people; however, other viruses often cause more severe disease in people whose immune systems are low, such as cancer patients undergoing treatment. For this reason, it is important to take precautions to prevent infection.

Infection occurs mostly through close, direct contact with someone who is carrying the virus.

- People are thought to be most contagious when they have symptoms, BUT some people may carry the virus even if they are not showing symptoms or are only mildly ill.
- It may be possible to catch the virus from a surface that an infected person touched (like door handles, tabletops, etc.).
- The chance of being infected depends on whether there are infected individuals in contact with the cancer patient.

## Q: Are there any travel restrictions for cancer patients?

**A:** There are now several advisories and restrictions on travel both in the U.S. and internationally as the virus becomes more widespread. Because COVID-19 is now in our region of Western New York, you should limit your movement in the community to activities/trips that are essential at this time.

### We currently recommend that cancer patients:

- **Do not travel.** It is best to postpone nonessential travel. We also highly suggest that cancer patients' immediate household contacts should postpone non-essential travel.
- **Avoid crowds.** The level of risk varies by country and area, and it is changing quickly.



Travel restrictions and recommendations are likely to change over time. Check frequently for updated recommendations on travel from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), and for travel to Canada.

## Q: My family member just returned from an area with high COVID-19 activity. What should I do?

**A:** It is best to avoid contact for 14 days with individuals who returned from an area where they could have been exposed to COVID-19. If the individuals remain healthy after 14 days, contact can be resumed.

**If avoiding contact is not possible, it is recommended to:**

- Practice frequent handwashing or hand sanitizer use.
- All household members should avoid touching their eyes, mouths, and noses.
- Cough and sneeze etiquette should be practiced.

## Q: Should cancer patients wear a mask or avoid public places?

**A:** Even for cancer patients, wearing a mask may not help prevent infection. Most surgical masks are not tight-fitting, and aerosols can get through. However, they may prevent you from touching your nose and mouth.

**Cancer patients should avoid overcrowded situations.**

If you have a fever and are coughing and sneezing, you should:

- Tell your clinical care team at Roswell Park.
- Put on a mask when you go out in public, to the hospital or a clinic appointment.

Overall, if you choose to use a mask to prevent any spread of infection, it is recommended to choose a surgical mask (DO NOT use an N95 mask), and use it combined with good hand hygiene.

## Q: How can I get tested to see if I have COVID-19?

**A:** At this moment, testing for the virus that causes COVID-19 can only be done by public health authorities, but this may change. If you believe you have COVID-19, call your clinical team for further instructions.

## Q: Is it safe for me to go to the hospital for appointments?

**A:** The risk of acquiring COVID-19 in hospitals in the United States and Canada is still very low. Healthcare facilities are evaluating patients for the risk of COVID-19, and if the suspicion is high, those patients are being isolated.

## Q: What should I do if I have flu-like/respiratory symptoms?

**A:** If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 or develop a fever and symptoms, such as cough or difficulty breathing, call your healthcare provider for medical advice. If you have only mild symptoms your physician may not want you to come to the clinic, so talk with your cancer care team **FIRST** before coming to a hospital or clinic.

Other precautions to take if you are experiencing symptoms are below. Visit **CDC.gov** for additional guidance.

- Avoid using public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.
- As much as possible, you should stay away from other people in your home. Stay in a specific “sick room” and use a separate bathroom, if available.
- If you are sick, you should wear a facemask, if you have access to one, when you are around other people and before you enter a healthcare provider’s office.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Throw used tissues in a lined trash can.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This is especially important after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid sharing personal household items.
- Clean all “high-touch” surfaces everyday.
- Seek medical attention, but call first, if your illness is worsening (for example, if you have difficulty breathing).

## Q: What should I do if a family member/co-worker is diagnosed with COVID-19?

**A:** A person diagnosed with or suspected of having COVID-19 should avoid all contact with cancer patients. The cancer patients or their family members should let their clinical team know they have been in contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19. The cancer patients should be monitored for symptoms and contact their clinical team if they develop fever, cough or shortness of breath.

Currently, there is no approved vaccine or medication to treat or prevent infection, but clinical trials are in development.

## Q: What can I do to prepare for an outbreak of COVID-19 in my area?

**A:** There is now community spread in Erie County and surrounding counties in Western New York. Public health authorities have enacted several restrictions and closures for public places and businesses, such as restaurants. It is essential that you abide by these restrictions and stay informed of the latest information by checking local public health reports.

### Precautions to take:

- Stay home unless it is essential to go out for groceries and other supplies. If you must go out in public, practice social distancing, which means maintaining a distance of at least six feet from other people.
- Wash hands frequently.
- Ensure you have enough supplies and medication.
- If possible, have at least two weeks of your medicines remaining at all times.
- Check to see if your insurance allows for 90-day supply rather than a 30-day supply.
- If your insurance supplies 30 days at a time, do not wait until the day before to refill, but refill a week in advance each time.

### Precautions to take:

- o Having medicines mailed to your home.
- o Using a pharmacy drive-thru.
- o Having your caregiver pick up your medicines to avoid public places.

## Q: Should I self-isolate as I am Immunocompromised?

**A:** Limit your movement in the community to activities/trips that are essential. If you must go out in public, our doctors recommend that you keep a social distance of at least six feet.

## Q: Should I still keep my appointment?

**A:** If your care team feels that an upcoming appointment, procedure or surgery can or should be rescheduled, they will be contacting you directly. At this time, we are only rescheduling non-urgent or routine appointments that can safely be post-poned and this is at the discretion of your treating physician. Virtual visits are also being offered for certain appointments.

## Q: Can my appointment be moved to one that is over the phone?

**A:** Roswell Park is working on a virtual visit option that will allow patients to have their appointments over the phone or video conferencing. If your appointment can be conducted in this manner, you will be contacted by your care team. To be ready for this option you must be registered on MyRoswell – Roswell Park's patient portal. If you are not enrolled, please do so immediately by going to [my.roswellpark.org](https://my.roswellpark.org) and follow the registration instructions.

## Q: Where can I get up-to-date information about COVID-19?

**A:** The CDC and WHO update information about the spread of COVID-19 daily, including changing conditions in the United States: [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) and [Who.Int](https://www.who.int)

For local information, you may also visit the  
Erie County Department of Health's website at

**[www.erie.gov](https://www.erie.gov)**



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