

Your COVID-19 action plan

INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY CANCER

With the COVID-19 situation changing rapidly, it's understandable if you're feeling anxious or concerned. While hospitals are under pressure, you'll still receive your essential cancer treatments.

If you test positive to COVID-19, it is important to let your treating team know as soon as possible, as you may be able to have particular COVID-19 treatments. You might also need to discuss changes to your cancer treatment.

PREPARING FOR COVID-19

Keep your vaccinations up to date

The COVID-19 vaccine is highly recommended for people with cancer as it reduces your chance of becoming very sick if you do get COVID-19.

People with cancer on active treatment who also have a weak immune system ("immunocompromised") need an additional primary dose of COVID-19 vaccine to have a similar level of protection as people with a healthy immune system. This excludes people on immunotherapy with checkpoint inhibitors as they're not expected to be immunocompromised because of treatment. If you are unsure if this is you, please check with your treating team.

Vaccine advice about the number of doses and time between doses is changing regularly. Speak with your GP or treating team to make sure your COVID-19 vaccinations are up to date.

Even with the vaccine, it is still important to continue taking other steps to protect yourself against COVID-19 such as practising good personal and household hygiene, wearing a mask and physical distancing.

Plan ahead

You can prepare for a COVID-19 positive case in your home with these steps.

1. Check your supplies of disinfectants, face masks, sanitisers, and gloves.
2. Have a supply of rapid antigen tests available. You can buy them at pharmacies, supermarkets, or online suppliers. Concession card holders can get free tests from a participating [community pharmacy](#) until the end of April 2022.
3. Stock up on your regular medicines and prescriptions.
4. Prepare and freeze nutritious meals so you don't have to cook.
5. Ask a friend or family member who doesn't live with you to be your support person while isolating – they could pick up supplies as needed and leave them at your door.
6. Make a list of important contacts such as your GP and treating team and keep it handy.

TESTING FOR COVID-19

Get tested if you have symptoms

- If you're showing signs of COVID-19, such as sore throat, runny nose, headache, cough, fever – get tested immediately.
- Test for COVID-19 with a rapid antigen test. This can be done at home and provide a result within 15 to 30 minutes.
- If you are at higher risk of more severe disease including those who are immunocompromised, or can't get a rapid antigen test, you can get a PCR test at [clinics](#) across NSW.
- If you're showing symptoms but your rapid antigen test comes back negative, please contact your treating team as you may need to get a PCR test.
- If you cannot leave home due to a chronic health issue, eligible people can contact the NSW Health COVID-19 Care at Home Support Line on **1800 960 933** (8:30am to 8:30pm).

Hospital testing rules

Public and private hospitals in NSW may have different COVID-19 testing requirements to enter. You may need to do a rapid antigen test before coming into hospital for treatment. Other hospitals are conducting tests upon entry. Contact your treating team to find out what you need to do before appointments at the hospital.

IF YOU GET COVID-19

If you test positive for COVID-19 while immunocompromised, it is important to let your treating team know as soon as possible.

Your treating team may recommend additional medication that targets the virus to reduce the severity of your symptoms and possible complications from it. These treatments work best when given 5–7 days after symptoms begin. They may also want to discuss temporarily changing your treatment schedule. For more information about making treatment decisions about your treatment and care if you have COVID-19, visit [Cancer Australia](#).

- For mild symptoms, such as headache, sore throat and runny or blocked nose, rest and recover at home.
- If your symptoms are getting worse and you're concerned, call your doctor, or NSW Health COVID-19 Care at Home Support Line on **1800 960 933** (8:30am to 8:30pm) or the 24-hour National Coronavirus Hotline on **1800 020 080**.
- For severe symptoms such as difficulty breathing, chest pain or passing out, call Triple Zero (000) immediately.

Visit NSW Health's website for a full list of [symptoms to watch out for](#) and [how to manage COVID-19](#).

Your COVID-19 positive checklist

- ✓ Complete the assessment survey sent via text message from NSW Health. Based on this you may be contacted by a health professional. You may also be eligible for financial assistance to support you while you are isolating.
- ✓ Let your treating team know as soon as you test positive. They will discuss when you can next attend hospital in line with your treatment schedule and hospital restrictions.
- ✓ Self-isolate at home as required, and in consultation with your treating team and schedule.
- ✓ Tell your household and other contacts you've tested positive.
- ✓ If you tested positive using a rapid antigen test, register your result with [Service NSW](#). If you need help registering your result, call **13 77 88**.
- ✓ Focus on your health and wellbeing, get plenty of rest, drink lots of fluids, take over-the-counter pain medications in consultation with your treating team for muscle aches and fever.
- ✓ Gather contact details of numbers you can use if your symptoms worsen and share these with your household or your emergency contact person. This includes your GP, treating team, NSW Health COVID-19 Care at Home Support Line, the National Coronavirus Hotline and the NSW Health Isolation Support Line on 1800 943 553.
- ✓ Seek available support services if needed to help with essential supplies and at-home care.

Cancer information and support

For general COVID-19 and cancer information and support including practical and emotional care, please contact Cancer Council's experienced health professionals on **13 11 20**. We can also link you to support services in your area.