COVID-19 Testing for People with Cancer

Patient and Family Information Sheet

This resource explains the signs of COVID-19, why you are being tested for COVID-19, when you will be tested for COVID-19 and what you can expect during a COVID-19 test. Please ask your cancer care team if you have any questions or concerns.

What are the signs of COVID-19?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fever</th>
<th>Diarrhea</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cough</td>
<td>Runny nose or Sneezing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shortness of Breath</td>
<td>Nasal Congestion (not due to allergies)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sore Throat</td>
<td>Fatigue or malaise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nausea</td>
<td>Changes in your sense of taste or smell</td>
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Report any signs of COVID-19 by calling your cancer doctor’s medical secretary at least 24 hours before your cancer centre appointment. Some signs of COVID-19 are the same as the side effects of cancer and cancer treatment. Your team will talk about your care choices with you.

Why am I being tested for COVID-19?

To protect you and keep you safe. Cancer treatments weaken the immune system. People who have a weakened immune system have the highest risk of getting very sick if they get COVID-19.

To protect our staff and other cancer patients. It is not known if people who have no symptoms of COVID-19 can spread it to our staff and other patients so we are taking extra care. Testing is important so we can take extra steps if needed.

When will I be tested for COVID-19?

- You will need to be tested for COVID-19 a few days before your treatment begins.
  We will contact you to tell you about the details of your COVID-19 test appointment.
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Where will I have my COVID-19 test?

You will be tested for COVID-19 at the Cancer Centre of Southeastern Ontario at Kingston General Hospital or a testing centre closer to your home. Your cancer care team will guide you.

The advantages of getting tested at the Cancer Centre of Southeastern Ontario include:

- We get the results of COVID-19 tests much faster than community assessment centres.
- The results of your test will be in your patient chart.

What can I expect during my COVID-19 test?

- To test for COVID-19, a health care provider will do a swab deep inside your nose, your throat or both areas.
- A health care provider may ask you to blow your nose, then to tilt your head back.
- Depending on the type of swab used, they may also swab the back of your mouth.
- They will swab the area for a few seconds, and then remove the swab.
- Most people find this to be quite uncomfortable, but not painful.

When will I get my COVID-19 test results?

- It takes 24 - 48 hours to get COVID-19 test results.
- You will hear from your care team if you test positive or if your test result is inconclusive.
- Call your cancer doctor’s office if you do not hear about your test result.

Will my treatment plan change if I have COVID-19?

Many patients have been asking if their treatment will change if they have COVID-19. This will be a very individual decision based on how serious your infection is, the type of cancer you have and the treatment you are getting. If you have COVID-19, your cancer care team will have a detailed discussion with you. They will give you the information you will need to make an informed choice about your treatment.

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