

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?

Fever	Diarrhea
Cough	Runny nose or Sneezing
Shortness of Breath	Nasal Congestion (not due to allergies)
Sore Throat	Fatigue or malaise
Nausea	Changes in your sense of taste or smell

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.

Cancer Centre of
Southeastern Ontario
A Cancer Care Ontario Partner

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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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