

Cancer and Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Nova Scotians having cancer treatment and cancer survivors may have questions about the risks associated with COVID-19 and cancer treatment. If you are undergoing cancer treatment, your immune system may not be as strong as it is normally. You may feel concerned about the risks associated with COVID-19, the illness it causes, and how it may affect your cancer care plans. Your Cancer Care Team is working very hard to keep you safe and follow recommendations from Public Health. **We will contact you if your appointment can be rescheduled or changed to a phone or video appointment. This will reduce the need for you to go out into public.** You are required to wear a mask to all in person cancer appointments.

I Feel Sick and I am Worried that it May Be COVID-19

Cancer Patients on Systemic Therapy **with Yellow or Orange Alert Card**

If you have a fever of 38°C (100.4°F) or higher and/or develop a new cough or shortness of breath **go directly to the Emergency Department (ED)**. For any other symptoms, during the regular workweek, call your cancer team. During the weekend or after hours, contact 811 via phone or [online](http://811.novascotia.ca/) at 811.novascotia.ca/

Other Cancer Patients currently receiving Radiation or Systemic Therapy treatment **without Yellow or Orange Alert Card**

If you develop a fever of 38°C (100.4°F) or higher, a new or worsening cough or shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose or headache and it is during the regular workweek, call your cancer team. During the weekend or after hours, contact 811 via phone or [online](http://811.novascotia.ca/) at 811.novascotia.ca/

Patients with Cancer or a History of Cancer and **Not Currently on Treatment**

If you have a fever greater than 38°C (100.4°F) a new or worsening cough or shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose or headache, please contact 811 via phone or [online](http://811.novascotia.ca/) at 811.novascotia.ca/

If you have previously received **Radiation Therapy to the chest** (lung or breast) and have tested negative for COVID-19 but still have a cough, shortness of breath and/or fever, please contact your Radiation Oncologist during the regular workweek at 902-473-6067 (Halifax) or 902-567-7771 (Sydney).

If you are having difficulty breathing or any symptoms that you are unable to manage at home, please go directly to the Emergency Department or call 911.

How Can I Protect Myself?

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Follow public health recommendations on mask wearing
- Always practice social distancing by staying at least 6 FEET (2 METRES) away from anyone you do not live with.
- Avoid contact with those who are sick or at risk of being exposed to COVID-19.

- Ask someone else to run your errands for you so you do not have to go out in public (like grocery and prescription pickup). You may also be able to have things delivered to your house.
- Be as healthy as you can. Get plenty of sleep, eat healthy, exercise, and manage your stress.

Other Useful Information

- Stop using tobacco. If you smoke, the most important thing you can do for your health is stop smoking. For more information: <https://tobaccofree.novascotia.ca/>
- Make sure you have enough supply of prescription and over the counter drugs at home. Allow up to 48 hours for community pharmacies to fill your prescriptions. If you would like your medications to be blister packed, allow 72 hours

Coping with Stress and Anxiety

It is understandable to feel anxious and concerned at this time given the current situation. Steps you can take to help:

- Listen to or read trusted sources of news like the Nova Scotia Health Authority, Government of Nova Scotia and Health Canada.
- Limit your time watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- Take care of your body. Take slow deep breaths, stretch, or meditate.
- Eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
- Be physically active.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Avoid alcohol and recreational drugs.
- Make time to relax by focusing on yourself and doing activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others by phone, e-mail, video chat, etc.
- Maintain a sense of hope and keep things in perspective.

If you are having a lot of difficulty coping with worry and anxiety about COVID-19 because you have cancer, please call the local number below for information and support:

Halifax Regional Municipality: 902-240-8129

Cape Breton: 902-567-8551

Antigonish/Guysborough/Richmond and South Eastern Inverness: 902-863-2830 Ext 4707

Yarmouth/Shelburne/Digby: 902-749-1523

Lunenburg and Queens County: 902-527-5820 or email Chantal.boudreau@nshealth.ca

Kings/Annapolis County: 902-690-3700

For all other parts of the province -toll-free: 1-866-599-2267

To read frequently asked questions about COVID-19 and Cancer, please visit www.nscancercare.ca

For general information about COVID-19, please visit www.novascotia.ca/coronavirus/

Information around COVID-19 and advice from Public Health is changing rapidly. This handout was last updated July 20, 2020.