

## Cancer and coronavirus

This information is about coronavirus if you have cancer. There are things you can do to protect yourself and other people from coronavirus. There is also information about the coronavirus vaccine.

Any words that are underlined are explained in the word list at the end. The word list also includes how to say the words in English.

If you have any questions about this information, ask your doctor or nurse at the hospital where you are having treatment.

You can also call Macmillan Cancer Support on freephone **0808 808 00 00**, 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm. We have interpreters, so you can speak to us in your own language. When you call us, please tell us in English which language you need.

We have more information about coronavirus on our website at [macmillan.org.uk/coronavirus](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/coronavirus)

### This information is about:

- What is coronavirus?
- What if I have cancer?
- What will happen to my cancer treatment?
- What is the coronavirus vaccine?
- How Macmillan can help you
- Word list
- More information in your language
- References and thanks

### What is coronavirus?

Coronavirus is sometimes called COVID-19. It is a virus that can affect your lungs. This virus can give you a lung infection which can make you very ill. Some people die from it.

### How do people get coronavirus?

The virus spreads from person to person. You can get it if you are near someone with the virus. You can also get it by touching a surface that has the virus on it.

### How will coronavirus make me feel?

If you have coronavirus, you may feel unwell. You might:

- have a cough that does not stop
- feel hot or shivery with a high temperature (over 37.5°C [99.5°F])
- not be able to smell or taste properly.

If you have cancer and feel unwell, call your cancer doctor or hospital right away for advice.

Some people with coronavirus do not feel unwell. They can still spread the virus to other people.

If you think you might have coronavirus you must stay at home. This is to stop you spreading coronavirus to others. Tell your doctor if you think you might have coronavirus.

### **How will I know if I have coronavirus?**

You can have a free test that will tell you if you have coronavirus. A trained person will test you or you can order a home test. [You can get home tests with instructions in other languages](#). For the test, they will usually swab the back of your throat and your nose. The swab looks like a long cotton bud.

You will need to be tested within days of having symptoms. Testing rules are different in:

- [England – visit \[www.gov.uk\]\(http://www.gov.uk\) to find out more](#)
- [Scotland – visit \[www.gov.scot\]\(http://www.gov.scot\) to find out more](#)
- [Wales – visit \[www.gov.wales\]\(http://www.gov.wales\) to find out more](#)
- [Northern Ireland – visit \[www.publichealth.hscni.net\]\(http://www.publichealth.hscni.net\) to find out more](#)

You should get your results in 1 to 3 days. If you are worried after getting your results you could talk to someone about how you feel.

### **What if I have cancer?**

If you have cancer, you may be more at risk of becoming very ill if you have coronavirus.

The parts of the body that fight viruses and infections are called the immune system. Some types of cancer and its treatments can make your immune system weaker. This means your body may not fight the coronavirus well.

### **How can I protect myself if I have cancer?**

There are things you can do to protect yourself:

- Get a coronavirus vaccine when it is offered to you

- Wear a mask when you are with other people or outside your house. This must cover your mouth and nose.
- Avoid places that are very busy
- Do not stand close to people and try to stay 2 metres apart
- Clean your hands often
- If you are indoors with people who are not in your household keep doors and windows open for fresh air

Book a test if you think you have coronavirus.

### **Shielding:**

At the start of the pandemic some people were told to shield. This meant staying indoors at all times and staying away from other people. It was to protect people with certain illnesses who might become very unwell if they had coronavirus.

Shielding is no longer advised. But people who were shielding should continue to be careful and protect themselves. This includes having a vaccination and checking any guidance for your local area. You can get the latest rules on the internet. You should be able to get the rules and advice in different languages and formats.

Some people want to continue shielding, Others are relieved to stop. It's a personal choice that you can think about for yourself and discuss with those close to you.

### **How can I take care of myself?**

It is really important to look after your health if you have cancer. These can make your immune system stronger. This can help you cope better with cancer treatment. The best things to do are:

- eat healthily
- drink lots of water or other fluids
- keep moving your body
- get enough rest
- talk about how you are feeling to other people.

We have more information about healthy eating in your language at [macmillan.org.uk/translations](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/translations)

### **What will happen to my cancer treatment?**

You might be worried about having cancer treatment, but you should have your treatment as planned. Talk to your doctor and nurse if you are worried about this.

You might be waiting for a scan or test. The cancer teams will still:

- diagnose cancer

- treat cancer
- give people the care they need.

You must wear a mask if you are having tests or treatment in a hospital or clinic. You may be tested for coronavirus before your treatment.

You might be worried about getting a vaccine if you are having cancer treatment. It is safe to have the vaccine. Your doctor can talk to you about the best time to have it. The vaccine may not work as well if you are having some cancer treatments. But it will still help to protect you from coronavirus.

## **What is the coronavirus vaccine?**

A vaccine is a medicine that helps to keep you safe from an illness. It is important that you get a coronavirus vaccine as this will help your immune system to protect you. This means that you are less likely to get very unwell with coronavirus.

Doctors want all adults to get the vaccine. If you have cancer, you should have the vaccine as soon as you can. This is because you will be at risk of being very unwell if you get coronavirus. Doctors have tested the vaccines to make sure they are safe to use.

Your doctor will tell you when you can get your vaccine. It is important to get the vaccine when your doctor tells you.

## **How will I get my vaccine?**

A doctor or nurse will give you the vaccine as an injection (jab) in your arm.

You will get the vaccine twice. You get your second vaccine 3 to 12 weeks after the first one.

The first vaccine starts to protect you 2 to 3 weeks after you have it. The second vaccine protects you for a longer time. It is important to get both doses of the vaccine.

## **What happens after I get the vaccine?**

You will still need to be careful after you have had the vaccine. The vaccine may not stop the virus spreading. But it should stop you becoming very poorly if you get coronavirus. You must still follow the rules in this information to stay safe after getting your vaccine.

## **How Macmillan can help you**

Macmillan is here to help you and your family. You can get support from:

- **The Macmillan Support Line (0808 808 00 00)**. We have interpreters, so you can speak to us in your language. Just tell us, in English, the language you

want to use. We can answer medical questions, give you information about financial support, or talk to you about your feelings. The phone line is open 7 days a week, 8am to 8pm.

- **The Macmillan website ([macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk))**. Our site has lots of English information about cancer and living with cancer. There is more information in other languages at [macmillan.org.uk/translations](http://macmillan.org.uk/translations)
- **Information and support services**. At an information and support service, you can talk to a cancer support specialist and get written information. Find your nearest centre at [macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres](http://macmillan.org.uk/informationcentres) or call us. Your hospital might have a centre.
- **Local support groups** – At a support group you can talk to other people affected by cancer. Find a group near you at [macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups](http://macmillan.org.uk/supportgroups) or call us.
- **Macmillan Online Community** – You can also talk to other people affected by cancer online at [macmillan.org.uk/community](http://macmillan.org.uk/community)

## More information in your language

We have information in your language about these topics:

<p><b>Types of cancer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breast cancer</li> <li>• Large bowel cancer</li> <li>• Lung cancer</li> <li>• Prostate cancer</li> </ul> <p><b>Treatments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chemotherapy</li> <li>• Radiotherapy</li> <li>• Surgery</li> </ul>	<p><b>Coping with cancer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you are diagnosed with cancer – a quick guide</li> <li>• Eating problems and cancer</li> <li>• End of life</li> <li>• Financial support – benefits</li> <li>• Financial support – help with costs</li> <li>• Healthy eating</li> <li>• Tiredness (fatigue) and cancer</li> <li>• Side effects of cancer treatment</li> <li>• What you can do to help yourself</li> </ul>
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To see this information, go to [macmillan.org.uk/translations](http://macmillan.org.uk/translations)

## References and thanks

This information has been written and edited by Macmillan Cancer Support's Cancer Information Development team. It has been translated by a translation company.

The information included is based on the Macmillan's online information about [cancer and coronavirus](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-and-coronavirus) at [macmillan.org.uk/coronavirus](https://www.macmillan.org.uk/coronavirus)

This information has been reviewed by relevant experts and approved by Dr Tim Iveson, Consultant Medical Oncologist and Macmillan Chief Medical Editor and Rosie Loftus, Macmillan Chief Medical Officer.

All our information is based on the best evidence available. For more information about the sources we use, please contact us at [cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk](mailto:cancerinformationteam@macmillan.org.uk)

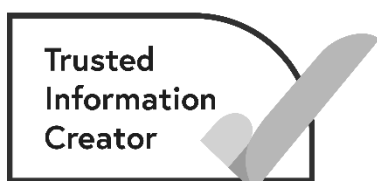
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