

# COVID-19

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**VERY IMPORTANT:** If you have fever, cough, shortness of breath, or any other symptoms, you should contact Texas Oncology *before* visiting our clinics for scheduled appointments. Patients are required to wear a face mask or face covering to their clinic appointment. Face masks with a valve are not permitted. Many locations are only permitting patients in our clinics at this time. Patients who need a caregiver for special circumstances such as mobility, translation, or disability should contact our staff. We ask that you not bring your children with you to your appointments at this time.

### As a cancer patient, am I at additional risk for catching COVID-19?

Patients with underlying medical conditions, like heart or lung disease or diabetes, or compromised immune systems, including many cancer patients, are more susceptible to viruses, including COVID-19. Some cancer therapies, such as targeted drugs, steroids, as well as some cancer types, like blood cancers, can result in a weakened immune system.

### As a cancer patient, if I am at higher risk, how can I protect myself?

You, your caregivers, and close contacts can take proactive measures to protect yourselves and those around you from COVID-19, including:

- Wash your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds and frequently. If soap and water are unavailable, use alcohol-based hand rub.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Throw tissues in the trash.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Stay home if at all possible, and especially if you are not well.
- Practice social distancing in all encounters with anyone who is not a member of your household.
- Avoid crowds while receiving therapy.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces with household cleaning spray or wipes.
- Call Texas Oncology first if you have concerns about your health.

### Should I wear a facemask?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends covering your mouth and nose with a face covering when around others and in public when social distancing is hard to maintain. All patients and visitors are required to wear a mask or face covering in Texas Oncology clinics. Face masks with valves are not permitted. In addition, Texas Governor Greg Abbott issued a statewide order on July 2, 2020, requiring face coverings to be worn in public spaces in all counties with more than 20 COVID-19 cases, with certain exceptions.

### What precautions is Texas Oncology taking in light of the COVID-19 situation?

Texas Oncology is closely monitoring COVID-19, including the latest updates from the CDC.

To reduce risk of exposure, we have implemented the following protocols and changes to how we operate, including:

- Pre-screening patients by phone prior to appointments
- Urging patients with fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other concerning symptoms to call before coming to scheduled appointments
- Screening patients for symptoms at entrances to our locations

- Postponing non-urgent appointments and offering expanded telemedicine appointments and telepharmacy services when clinically appropriate
- Providing information for patients who may need COVID-19 testing
- Reinforcing guidelines for use of personal protective equipment, (e.g., face masks, gowns, gloves)
- Isolating patients who come into our locations exhibiting respiratory symptoms.
- Limiting or prohibiting visitors to our locations (Visit [www.texasoncology.com/covid19](http://www.texasoncology.com/covid19) for a list of locations not permitting any visitors.)

### **What should I do if my caregiver has recently traveled, participated in an event with a large crowd, or engaged in other potentially risky activities?**

You should be mindful of potential exposure risk in your contact with anyone, including a caregiver. To the extent possible, you should limit extended, direct contact. It is essential that you and caregivers and close contacts wear face coverings.

If your caregiver or close contact is sick, encourage them to seek medical attention, and avoid contact with them until they are well, e.g., free from fever for at least 72 hours. The CDC regularly posts updated recommendations on travel, face masks, and other safety measures at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).

### **Where can I get more information?**

Texas Oncology continues to keep our staff and patients updated as the COVID-19 situation evolves. For more information on COVID-19, Texas Oncology recommends the following resources:

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** [cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://cdc.gov/coronavirus)
- **World Health Organization:** [who.int/coronavirus](http://who.int/coronavirus)
- **Texas Department of State Health Services:** [dshs.state.tx.us/coronavirus](http://dshs.state.tx.us/coronavirus)
- **Texas Oncology:** [texasoncology.com/covid19](http://texasoncology.com/covid19)