

COVID-19 | WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Melanoma treatment and COVID-19:

Being treated for melanoma, or other skin cancers, can put patients at a higher risk of contracting infections. Hunter Melanoma Foundation (HMF) understands that people in the Hunter undergoing treatment or who have recently finished treatment may have a few questions around how the outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) might impact them.

Please note that this is a rapidly evolving health event and updates are changing often, so please check the Australian Department of Health website <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts>.

Generally, if you are undergoing or have had recent treatment for melanoma you should continue to follow any specific advice and standard precautions recommended by your health care practitioners to minimise the risk of infection.

Melony the Melon says 'practice good hygiene':

If you are currently undergoing treatment or be sure to:

- 1 Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, or if not immediately available use an alcohol-based hand rub. It's a good idea to carry this with you. It is especially important to wash your hands before eating or drinking
- 2 Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth as this can transfer the virus from surfaces
- 3 Avoid contact with those who are sick or unwell or have been exposed to the virus or may be at higher risk due to recent overseas travel
- 4 Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces (tables, benches, lightswitches, doorknobs, sinks, toilets, or mobile phones)
- 5 Avoid crowds and crowded areas and avoid unnecessary physical contact, such as shaking hands, hugging or kissing
- 6 Maintain a 1.5 meters physical distance between yourself and others and avoid social habits such as kissing or handshakes
- 7 Talk to your doctor or member of your treatment team about the times in your treatment when you may be at the highest risk of infection so you can plan your activities accordingly. (Unfortunately, there are no shortcuts to boosting the immune system beyond adhering to a healthy lifestyle)
- 8 Call your treatment team to see if you can do some of your consultations remotely via phone, Skype or Facetime
- 9 Stay home as much as possible and avoid non-essential travel and avoid public transport if you can

If you are experiencing symptoms:

If you are experiencing symptoms of infection (e.g. fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath) or you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for coronavirus, contact your treatment team. If possible, do this via phone rather than attending in person.

How family and friends can help

If you have had contact with a person who may be at an increased risk of having coronavirus, avoid any contact with a person who is receiving treatment for melanoma.

It is also worthwhile talking to your health professional about receiving a flu vaccination as early in the flu season as possible. This can minimise the potential of the friend or family member being treated for melanoma catching the flu or other infections.

Where to get further information:

The Australian Government Department of Health updates information on COVID-19 regularly at:

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>.

The Cancer Council also has a support and information line available on:

13 11 20

This hotline is open during business hours. They can provide emotional support as well as practical tips for minimising the risk of infection during this time.

You can also contact the Coronavirus Health Information Line on:

1800 020 080

Advice on cleaning and disinfecting at:

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/cleaning-disinfection.html

WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

If you are feeling anxious, have any questions or just want to chat we are here.

You can contact the Hunter Melanoma Foundation on:

0412 955 934

**You are not alone.
We are here to help.**

