

# COVID-19 and Cancer

## What does COVID-19 mean for my cancer treatment?

Undergoing cancer treatment can be challenging under the best of circumstances. For people living with cancer, the COVID-19 pandemic has introduced additional challenges and concerns, including worry about COVID-19 exposure, possible changes to or delays in anticipated treatment, and other stressors.

At this time, it is especially important to be thoughtful about how you can communicate with your care team about your health status, risks, and treatment plan, as well as how you continue to care for yourself physically and emotionally.

### Getting the information you need about your treatment

- **Talk with your provider about your treatment plan.** If you haven't done so already, schedule an appointment to talk with your provider about their plan for your treatment during this time. Many SCCA providers are available to meet with patients via telehealth or by phone to review current treatment, discuss possible changes to treatment during this time, and explore care options.
- **Prepare for your conversation with your provider beforehand.** It can be helpful to write down your questions before you speak with your medical team so you can be sure to ask about the things that are most important to you. Also, if possible, plan to have a trusted person with you to take notes while you're talking with your provider or ask your provider if you can record the conversation using cell phone or other device.

### Questions you can bring to your provider<sup>i</sup>

- *In my situation, how can I prevent getting COVID-19?*
  - *Should I take my treatment now? Will it put me more at risk?*
  - *Is there a chance SCCA will cancel my scheduled treatment? What are my options if it's canceled? Is there another treatment center where I can get treatment?*
  - *If I get tested and I'm positive for COVID-19, what will happen?*
- **Continue the conversation.** Our current situation is an evolving one, with practices and recommendations changing as circumstances shift and new information emerges. Know that your SCCA providers are committed to an ongoing dialogue to address your concerns. It's a good idea to make a plan for follow-up with your care team so that you know when you can expect to hear updates about any changes that might affect your care.
  - **Get help if needed.** If you're struggling with communicating with your care team or feel that your concerns aren't being addressed, know that you can get help. SCCA Social Work can partner with you to facilitate communication with your care team and advocate for you to get the information you need at this time. Social Work can also help you ensure that your treatment path reflects your personal goals, preferences, and values, as well as assist you with navigating other practical and emotional challenges. To request an appointment with your clinic social worker, call (206) 606-1076.

<sup>i</sup> These questions and many more can be found at <https://www.cancer.org/treatment/treatments-and-side-effects/physical-side-effects/low-blood-counts/infections/questions-to-ask-about-coronavirus.html>