

LCRF is committed to helping lung cancer patients, your families and caregivers, especially at this critical time when the lung cancer community may be among the most vulnerable.

Below are some tips for keeping yourself and your loved ones healthy and safe.

What is the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that affects your breathing and spreads from person-to-person contact. How it affects each person varies from mild to severe illness or death. A vaccine and treatment for COVID-19 is now available and research continues to determine which treatments work best for this virus. The majority of individuals who get COVID-19 experience mild illness that can be monitored at home. Individuals who experience severe illness need to be hospitalized. Lung cancer patients should monitor their symptoms closely as they may be at high risk of developing severe illness from a COVID-19 infection.

What can I do to reduce my risk of getting or spreading COVID-19?

It is critically important to practice what is called **“social distancing.”** This means you stay inside your home as much as possible and avoid any non-essential gathering where you will be in close contact with others. Reducing the number of people you come into contact with will reduce your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19 to others. Social distancing is especially important if you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19.

If you must travel outside of your home for important medical appointments, etc. please keep at least 6 feet distance between you and others, and wear a face mask at all times. Cover your coughs or sneezes with a disposable tissue, and avoid touching your face or others with unwashed hands.

The information presented here is not intended to substitute for medical advice provided by your healthcare team. We encourage you to speak with your doctor or nurse about your specific health questions or concerns.

How do I practice social distancing while in treatment for lung cancer?

Please talk to your doctor about if you need to change how or when you receive your current treatment(s). Your doctor will make the decision on how to deliver your care safely and effectively while keeping you safe from COVID-19.

I have lung cancer, do I need to be tested for COVID-19?

The CDC continues to update the list of conditions or scenarios that would put someone in a high risk category. Please see the full list at [LCRF.org/CDC-increased-risk](https://www.lcrf.org/CDC-increased-risk). In some scenarios, lung cancer patients who are currently on an immunosuppressing medication or of a certain age, etc. can be at high risk.

What are some of the most common symptoms of COVID-19?

Common symptoms include fever, cough, difficulty breathing, fatigue, body aches, new loss of smell or taste, and more. The CDC has a symptom self-checker that you can find at this link: [LCRF.org/CDC-symptoms](https://www.lcrf.org/CDC-symptoms).

NOTE: If you are feeling sick and need medical attention, please call your doctor **right away**. Your doctor will decide if testing is right for you.

Is it safe to continue my treatments/medical appointments?

If you have any questions or concerns you should speak with your doctor. Questions to consider asking your doctor can include:

1. If I get COVID-19, how will it affect me since I am a lung cancer patient/survivor?
2. If I am exposed or have symptoms of COVID-19, what should I do?
3. How can I safely continue my treatment while reducing my exposure to COVID-19?
4. Do you recommend any other methods for staying safe while at home?
5. What supplies do I need at home to keep me healthy?

Should you get the COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes! The COVID-19 vaccination will help keep you from being infected with COVID-19.

While COVID-19 vaccines are being developed as quickly as possible, routine processes and procedures remain in place to ensure the safety of any vaccine that is authorized or approved for use. All COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the United States have been shown to be highly effective at preventing COVID-19 and are safe.

It is best though to discuss the risks and benefits of getting one of the COVID-19 vaccines with your doctor. They can advise you and tell you when you should receive it.

Currently, three COVID-19 vaccines have been approved by the FDA:

Pfizer

- 2 shots, 21 days apart
- 95% effective at preventing laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 illness

Moderna

- 2 shots, one month (28 days) apart
- 94.1% effective at preventing laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 illness

Johnson & Johnson

- 1 shot
- 66.3% effective in preventing laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 illness

Who can get the vaccine?

The goal is for everyone to eventually get the vaccine. Due to limited quantities of the COVID-19 vaccine, each state has a roll-out method based on individuals' risk levels.

The CDC has recommendations for states to follow for the vaccine rollouts. However, each state has its own rules. You can find out your state's at [vaccinefinder.org/search](https://www.vaccinefinder.org/search).

Phase 1 of the vaccine rollout includes:

- Essential workers.
- People age 65+
- People aged 16-64 years with underlying medical conditions

Can a COVID-19 vaccine make me sick with COVID-19?

No. None of the COVID-19 vaccines contain the live virus, so the vaccine cannot make you sick with COVID-19.

After getting a COVID-19 vaccine, will I test positive for COVID-19 on a viral test?

No. COVID-19 tests only show a positive result if you currently have an active virus.

If I have already had COVID-19 and recovered, do I still need to be vaccinated?

Yes. Experts do not know yet if having COVID-19 protects you from getting it again. Getting the vaccine protects you.

What side effects might I experience from the vaccine?

Some of the side effects that have been reported include:

- Pain, redness, or swelling at the injection site
- Fever
- Chills
- Feeling tired
- Muscle and joint pain
- Headache

When will I be considered fully vaccinated?

You are considered fully vaccinated 2 weeks after your second dose in a 2-dose series, and 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine. At that point:

- You can safely gather indoors with fully vaccinated people without wearing a mask.
- You can gather indoors with unvaccinated people from one other household without masks.
- You should still be **wearing a mask, staying at least 6 feet apart from others, and avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated space.**
- You should still **avoid** medium- or large-sized gatherings.
- You should still **delay** domestic and international travel.
- You should still **watch out for symptoms** of COVID-19, especially if you've been around someone who is sick.

Sources:

1. CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
2. NYC Health coronavirus fact sheet: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/coronavirus-factsheet.pdf>
3. Cancer.org: <https://www.cancer.org/treatment/treatments-and-side-effects/physical-side-effects/low-blood-counts/infections/covid-19-vaccines-in-people-with-cancer.html>