

COVID-19

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The spread of COVID-19, caused by a novel coronavirus, is rapidly evolving and is being studied by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), and other health organizations.

Risk Factors

- **Community Spread:** The greatest risk of infection is through community spread – coming into close contact with someone who is COVID-19 positive, without practicing social distancing and wearing face masks often at home or other gatherings.
- **Travel-related Risk:** Travel increases your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19. You should avoid travel to locations where COVID-19 cases are prevalent or increasing.
- **Suppressed Immune Systems:** People with 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.

Symptoms

Symptoms of COVID-19 may appear from two to 14 days after exposure. The CDC recommends that patients showing signs and symptoms be isolated to prevent infecting others with the virus for a period of at least 10 days since symptoms first appear.

If a person experiences any of the following symptoms, especially fever, cough, or shortness of breath, he or she should consult a physician.

- Fever
- Body Aches
- Chills
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Sore Throat
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath
- Loss of sense of smell/taste

Prevention

Common-sense steps can help prevent spread of COVID-19:

- **Get vaccinated when authorized COVID-19 vaccines become available to you.**
- **Wear a face mask whenever you are around others.**
- **Practice social distancing. Stay a minimum six feet apart in all encounters with anyone who is not a member of your household and keep a safe distance from anyone who has been in contact with others outside of your home.**
- **Avoid crowds. Stay home if at all possible. Do not venture out if you do not feel well.**
- **Avoid close contact with sick people.**
- **Wash hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds and frequently. If soap and water are unavailable, use alcohol-based hand rub.**
- **Disinfect frequently touched surfaces with household cleaning spray or wipe.**
- **Call Texas Oncology first if you have questions or concerns.**

All patients and visitors are required to wear a mask in Texas Oncology clinics. The CDC recommends wearing face masks in public.

Prevention and Treatment

Vaccines to protect against COVID-19 are currently in distribution. COVID-19 vaccines may impact the interpretation of imaging results, including screening mammograms and PET/CT scans. If possible, get your screenings before you receive the vaccine, or wait six weeks after being fully vaccinated. Contact your physician if you are due for a screening mammogram or PET/CT and have not yet received the COVID-19 vaccine. Treatment has improved since the pandemic began, but unfortunately many people still have serious illness leading to death or chronic health problems. Patients should receive supportive care to relieve symptoms. Some people who contract the virus have no symptoms or experience mild symptoms. Prevention plays an integral role in avoiding infection and being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.