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Trials Network

COVID-19 and Your Child, Teen, or Young Adult with Cancer

COVID-19 is a new virus that has now spread across the world. We know that this virus has caused worry for everyone, and for families taking care of children with cancer, we know that the worry may be even higher. Children, teens, and young adults undergoing treatment for cancer have lowered immunity that may make it harder for them to fight infection, such as COVID-19.

As a parent or caregiver of a child, teen, or young adult with cancer, you should take extra precautions. Below you will find some facts that will help you to lower the chance of your child catching the infection or transmitting it to others, and will help you know what to do if you think your child may have COVID-19. As always, please contact your child's primary treatment team with any concerns that you may have.

How is the COVID-19 virus spread?

- The virus is spread by coming in contact with droplets from the respiratory system of an infected person.
- These droplets can spew out of an infected person's nose or mouth (such as when they speak, cough or sneeze) and they can travel about 6 feet.
- The droplets then can stay on surfaces where they land, such as on countertops. Or if the infected person has touched the droplets with their hands (such as when wiping their nose, or covering their mouth when they cough), the droplets can be transferred to other surfaces, such as door knobs, light switches, phones, keyboards, water faucets, gas pump handles, etc.
- If an infected droplet comes in contact with your child's eyes, nose, or mouth, it can cause them to become infected. This includes whether the droplet comes directly from the infected person, or whether your child touches an infected surface.

How can I protect my child from getting infected?

- **Follow the principles of social distancing:**
 - Keep 6 feet of distance between your child and other people, if at all possible
 - Do not allow your child to attend social gatherings or be with crowds of people
 - Avoid using mass transit (such as buses and subways)
 - Keep your child at home as much as possible, and away from anyone who is sick
 - Follow COVID-19 recommendations as advised by your national and/or local authorities

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• **Practice good hygiene:**

- Make sure you wash your hands very frequently - at least once an hour when awake - with soap and water for at least 20 seconds each time. And have your child wash their hands frequently too. This includes while you are at home.
- If your child is old enough, remind them to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth
- Clean high-touch surfaces, such as phones, keyboards, doorknobs, light switches, and countertops using antibacterial wipes or household cleaners at least once a day
- Do not let your child shake hands or hug other people
- Do not let your child share household items (such as cups and towels) with others

Will my child continue their cancer treatment during the COVID-19 health emergency?

- In most cases, treatment will continue as planned.
- Your treatment center will continue to provide essential treatment for your child.
- Do not stop any home chemotherapy without talking to your child's treatment team first.
- If you have any questions about your child's treatment, talk with your child's treatment team.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

- The most common symptoms are:
 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Symptoms may also include:
 - Tiredness
 - Aches
 - Runny nose
 - Sore throat
 - Diarrhea or nausea
 - Loss of taste or smell

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If my child gets a fever, do I still have to come to the hospital?

- Your management of your child's fever should not change because of COVID-19.
- If your child has a fever you should continue to follow the usual instructions for fever that you have received from your health care team.

What should I do if I think my child may have COVID-19?

- If you think your child may have COVID-19, be sure to notify your health care team when you call, so that they can determine what precautions and next steps are needed.
- Be sure to tell any health care provider who is caring for your child that your child is being treated for cancer.

Is there anything else I can do?

- We recognize this is a very stressful time for you and your family.
- COVID-19 information continues to change daily and it is important to keep connected with your health care team.
- Please talk to your team about your questions and worries during this time.