



## **SOCIAL DISTANCING TIPS FOR COLORECTAL CANCER PATIENTS AND CAREGIVERS**

AVOIDING CROWDS, STAYING HOME, AND SOCIAL DISTANCING ARE PART of the new normal in the wake of coronavirus (COVID-19). Across the country, people are facing a variety of recommendations aimed to protect their health, such as frequent hand washing, staying distant from those outside your household, and even wearing masks when out in public.

Colorectal cancer patients in treatment are considered to be **immunocompromised**, meaning they have weakened immune systems and have a reduced ability to fight viruses and infections, including COVID-19.

Because of this, colorectal cancer patients and their loved ones should take extra precautions and heed the recommendations from organizations like the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Staying home and away from family and friends is hard—even if it can help you avoid getting or spreading a virus. We reached out to patients and caregivers to put together this list of tips for preparing and managing your life during these challenging times.



### **TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR**

**Changes in medical care can happen without notice in an effort to minimize the virus from spreading. Remember your safety and health is of top concern for your care team! Keep the lines of communication open and ask the following questions:**

- What are the risks and benefits of putting my treatment on hold?
- Will my cancer grow if I stop treatment?
- How soon can I get back on my scheduled treatment plan?
- What can I expect from telehealth appointments?
- Will my loved one be able to join me at the cancer center for my infusion treatments?
- What types of safety measures can I expect when I return to the hospital/clinic?
- When should I go to the emergency room versus calling my doctor or nurse?
- What will happen if I lose my insurance during this time?

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## **STOCK UP**

**It is important to ensure you have enough in your home so that you don't need to leave or restock for as long as possible. Here's a list of items to make sure you have on hand:**

- Medication: talk to your doctor about whether or not you can have medications delivered, or prescriptions updated to last longer.
- Ostomy supplies
- Gloves (but remember, using ungloved hands—and then washing them often—is the best for usual, everyday tasks)
- Creams, ointments, and medicated shampoo to manage skin rashes from treatment
- General hygiene items: handsoap, toothpaste, floss, shampoo/conditioner
- Paper goods: toilet paper and paper towels
- Home cleaning supplies



## **PREPARE: MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY**

**Staying home for weeks on end can take a toll on your mental health. Here are some ideas to make sure you have the support you need:**

- Ask your mental health care provider if you can do telehealth visits
- Download a meditation app like Headspace or Calm
- Keep your home organized and clutter-free
- Reduce screen time to a minimum if possible
- Give yourself space to rest and take it easy
- Dedicate an area of your home as an exercise space
- Spend time outside at home, such as in your front/back yard and neighborhood, as permitted by your local government



## **PLAN FOR THINGS TO DO**

**Whether you have a hobby or not, staying home could be a great opportunity to try something new:**

- Get crafty with art or home projects
- Tackle those books you've been meaning to read
- Learn to do yoga
- Experiment with new recipes (try out a grocery delivery service to keep fresh foods on hand)

**For more information on these and other topics related to COVID-19, visit [FightCRC.org/Coronavirus](https://www.fightcrc.org/coronavirus)**