

Navigating COVID-19

Information on COVID-19 and Resources for the Metastatic Breast Cancer Community



As we learn more about the novel coronavirus, which causes the disease COVID-19, we understand that this may be a particularly challenging time for the metastatic breast cancer (MBC) community. Here are some commonly asked questions and resources that may be helpful in this unprecedented time. As developments on COVID-19 continue to evolve there is still a lot to learn, visit the [CDC Guidelines](#) to continue to learn the latest.



QUESTIONS ABOUT COVID-19:

Q: What is COVID-19?

A: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the new coronavirus. Some people who contracted this virus experience fever (body temperature over 100.4°F/38°C), cough, or shortness of breath or difficulty breathing. Other common symptoms may include but are not limited to, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, and headaches.

Q: How does the new coronavirus spread?

A: Scientists and researchers are still learning about COVID-19. What we do know is that the virus spreads through physical contact and through respiratory droplets from coughing and sneezing. Some people infected with this virus feel symptomatic. Yet, symptoms can appear up to 2 weeks after exposure to the virus, meaning some people who have been infected may be asymptomatic and still have the ability to spread the virus before showing common symptoms of the disease.

Q: What can I do to help protect myself, my family and others from the spread of the new coronavirus?

A: Whether you call it physical distancing or social distancing, it means keeping a distance of at least 6 feet (2 meters) between yourself and other people. It's one of the best things you can do to protect yourself and others from the virus, and to stop it from spreading. Washing hands often and for at least 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based rub frequently is also important.

Q: If I have MBC, am I more at risk of contracting the virus and developing COVID-19?

A: People with certain medical conditions may be at higher risk for developing COVID-19. This includes people diagnosed with breast cancer because cancer treatments can weaken their immune systems, which means it may be harder for their body to fight off the virus. If you have questions about your treatment plan contact your health care provider for guidance. People diagnosed with cancer and their loved ones may take steps to reduce risk, including:

- Staying home as much as possible and when you do leave the home, keep a distance of at least 6 feet between yourself and other people
- Washing hands often and for at least 20 seconds each time
- Cleaning surfaces that are touched often, such as door knobs, kitchen counters and cell phones
- Wearing cloth face coverings if you are in a public setting where social distancing measures are hard to maintain (eg, grocery store, pharmacy)

Q: What should I do if I start showing COVID-19 symptoms?

A: If you are starting to show symptoms reach out to your medical team now for guidance, it is important not to wait for the symptoms to get worse. Call your health care provider if you have any concerns about underlying medical conditions or if you get sick, and think that you may have COVID-19. If you need emergency help, call 911.

Q: Should I be concerned my treatment plan may change during this time? What should I do if I have concerns or questions about my treatment?

A: Cancer treatments vary from person to person. As someone who may be at higher risk, it may be helpful to have a list of questions to ask your health care provider. Below is a guide.

- If someone in my family gets COVID-19, what should I do?
- Should I continue taking my treatment at home, as normal?
- Should I be concerned if I have to reschedule a medical appointment or procedure?
- How can I tell the difference between possible treatment side effects and COVID-19 symptoms?
- What are the risks of infection compared to the benefits from my cancer treatment?
- Is telemedicine an option for me during this time?

Q: Are there people I can talk to who share my unique concerns?

A: During the COVID-19 outbreak, it's normal to have a range of emotions. When you are social distancing, you or your loved ones might start to feel lonely or isolated. To help you to feel more connected, you can consider:

- Creating a group chat to communicate within your home or community
- Video chatting with people in your community at specific times during the day or night (eg, have lunch together)

You can also visit the advocacy resources listed below.



COVID-19 STATUS RESOURCES

Global

- **World Health Organization (WHO):** Global guidelines, recommendations and current information on COVID-19

Regional

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):** Up-to-date COVID-19 information and reliable resources from the U.S. government

Local

- **CDC - State Information Center:** Links to state health departments in the United States for more specific guidelines near you

Advocacy Resources

- **ABC Global Alliance:** Global resources to inform patients and support oncology professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic
- **Breastcancer.org:** Support resources for those living with breast cancer, including a **COVID-19 forum** and a **podcast series**
- **Living Beyond Breast Cancer:** Resources to help manage stress and anxiety and a glossary of COVID-19 resources, including insights on telemedicine
- **MBC Alliance - The MBC Community and COVID-19:** COVID-19 resources developed by additional advocacy groups and partners
- **Metastatic Trial Talk COVID-19:** A number of metastatic breast cancer-focused resources, such as **webinars and online learning**, and topics like **patient information, cancer care** and more
- **METAvivor COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Resources:** Reputable websites and resources to reference if you have COVID-19 questions
- **Sharsheret Webinar Series:** Experts discussing COVID-19 and how to help those affected by breast cancer and their loved ones
- **Make Your Dialogue Count - Navigating Isolation:** A list of metastatic breast cancer support groups

For information on how Novartis is responding, see [here](#).

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