Information for Cancer Patients on COVID-19

By CCMB Communications and Public Affairs
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Diagnostic Imaging

Cancer patients are and continue to be a priority for Diagnostic Imaging services during this pandemic period. Therefore, no cancellations of appointments have been made by Diagnostic Services. However, some patients have chosen to cancel their appointment for a Diagnostic test (for example, X-ray or scan) on their own. These cancellations are being communicated by Diagnostics to the referring physicians.

If you have cancelled an appointment for a Diagnostic test during the pandemic period, be sure to connect with your care team at CancerCare Manitoba or your primary care physician to ensure the appointment is rescheduled in order for your care to continue in a timely manner.

Physical Distancing During COVID-19

CancerCare Manitoba (CCMB) continues to provide care to patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. Where possible and appropriate, clinic visits are being carried out over the phone or through Telehealth to reduce the need for patients to come to a CCMB site and to stay at home. Sometimes it is necessary to attend an appointment at a CCMB site to receive treatment such as radiation or chemotherapy.

We want you to know that we are very mindful of the physical distancing recommendations currently in place—to maintain a distance of two metres between persons. As much as possible while providing patient care, we are practicing physical distancing every day whether between staff persons or between staff and patients. If you are receiving a treatment, close contact with staff will be inevitable. However, this contact will be within the recommended time of less than 10 minutes, appropriate protective measures are being taken, and you will not be put at risk.

CCMB is here for you and we are doing everything possible to make your visit to a CCMB site as safe as possible, for you, your family and our staff.

Mental Health Virtual Therapy Program - Now Available

Caring for your mental health is important during the COVID-19 pandemic. AbilitiCBT (https://manitoba.ca/covid19/bewell/virtualtherapy.html) is a new digital therapy program from Morneau Shepell (https://www.morneaushepell.com/ca-en), available to all Manitobans experiencing mild to moderate symptoms of anxiety due to the pandemic. Learn more (https://manitoba.ca/covid19/bewell/virtualtherapy.html).
CCMB started a new initiative this week regarding lab coats.

Clinical staff and physicians are now wearing lab coats to enhance the quality of our operations during the pandemic.

The lab coats have been made available thanks to the generous support of CancerCare Manitoba Foundation (https://www.cancercarefdn.mb.ca/).

Changes Regarding Counselling and Patient and Family Support Services

In response to the COVID-19 situation in Manitoba, CancerCare Manitoba has made changes to some of our counselling and patient and family support services.

Please know that this is only temporary. Right now we are taking extra steps to protect cancer patients, their families and staff.

Cancer patients or their families who are in need of counselling support can still receive services. Call 204-787-2109 or toll-free at 1-866-561-1026.

Telephone appointments are being offered instead of in-person appointments.

Any clients whose appointments have been changed will be contacted directly.

Some of our information and support services are on hold at this time.

Specific changes can be found here (/export/sites/default/.galleries/files/Changes-to-CCMB-Programs-and-Services.pdf).

For any urgent situations, cancer patients and their families are asked to call Patient and Family Support Services. Phone 204-787-2109 or toll-free at 1-866-561-1026.

The risk of exposure to COVID-19 during travel outside of Manitoba continues to increase.
If you are a patient at CCMB and have an appointment for a clinic visit, chemotherapy or radiation treatment **AND you have travelled outside the province in the past 14 days**, please contact your CCMB care team the day before your appointment (or call 1-855-837-5400) for instructions.

**What do I need to know?**

If you have cancer, you are at a higher risk of getting an infection. Certain cancers and cancer treatments weaken your immune system making it hard for your body to fight infections.

**What are the symptoms of COVID-19?**

It is important to watch for flu-like symptoms such as:

- Fever 38°C or higher
- Cough
- One or more of the following:
  - Sore Throat
  - Runny Nose
  - Nasal Stuffiness
  - Muscle or joint aches
  - Chills
  - Fatigue (tiredness)
  - Weakness
  - Feeling unwell
  - Diarrhea (loose bowel or watery stool)

**I have an appointment at CancerCare Manitoba. What is going to happen?**

- If you are scheduled in the treatment room or for radiation treatment, please attend your appointment as scheduled unless you are told otherwise.
- For clinic visits, your appointment will occur by phone, unless you are told otherwise. Make sure you are available by the phone at your scheduled appointment time. Please note that calls may not occur at your exact appointment time.
- Your physician may change your appointment. In this case you will be contacted by phone.

**What do I need to know when I arrive for my appointment?**

To protect the safety of patients and staff, CancerCare Manitoba must limit the number of people in the building.

- **Effective March 25, 2020**, we are tightening our risk reduction measures. Support persons/escorts will not be allowed to accompany patients for visits except in exceptional circumstances. Pediatric patients are allowed only one parent/caregiver to be present at the appointment. You can use your personal cell phone to include another person in your appointment.

- When you arrive at the entrances listed below, you will be assessed for travel history and symptoms.
- If your appointment is at **675 McDermot Avenue**:
  - You must enter at the front door at 675 McDermot Avenue
- If your appointment is at **CancerCare Manitoba St. Boniface Unit**:
  - You must enter at south entrance (below Emergency entrance)
- If your appointment is at **CancerCare Oncology Victoria General Hospital**:
  - You must enter the main doors of the Buhler Cancer Centre
• If your appointment is at Western Manitoba Cancer Centre:
  • You must enter the north main entrance

• If your appointment is at CancerCare Oncology Grace General Hospital:
  • You must enter the main entrance on Booth Drive

• If your appointment is at CancerCare Oncology Concordia Hospital:
  • You must enter the main entrance on Concordia Avenue

• If your appointment is at CancerCare Oncology Seven Oaks General Hospital:
  • CancerCare Manitoba’s Seven Oaks General Hospital cancer clinic will be delivered out of the Victoria General Hospital cancer clinic for the next four weeks (as of March 20, 2020). You must enter the main doors of the Buhler Cancer Centre at Victoria General Hospital. See contact information below:
    ▪ Dr. Tunji Fatoye at Seven Oaks General Hospital/Victoria General Hospital Cancer Clinic
      Phone number: 204-477-3328 (front reception)
      Fax number: 204-275-1376
      Nurse: Maribeth Mayuga
      Clerk: Caroline Caernac

If I have flu-like symptoms, what should I do?

If you have any of the symptoms listed above, DO NOT come to CancerCare Manitoba. You might put other patients at risk

Here’s what you need to do:

• Call your healthcare team at CancerCare Manitoba and tell them your symptoms.
• Follow their instructions on what to do.
• If you need urgent medical care call 911. Tell them you are a cancer patient and what symptoms you have.

I have had cancer and I am not on any active treatment. What do I need to know?

Cancer patients who have recently finished their active treatment need to know:

• It takes time for your immune system to recover after treatment.
• Depending on the type of cancer and cancer treatment you had, this may take months or longer. Talk your health care team if you have questions.
• Be careful. Follow the steps below to reduce your risk of getting an infection.

Cancer patients who completed their treatment a long time ago or who are considered in remission (no sign of cancer):

• The risk of infection is thought to be lower if you are younger and otherwise healthy.
• If you are older (over 65) or have other health conditions (such as lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease), your risk of getting an infection is high.

How can I lower my risk of getting an infection?

If you are on cancer treatment you are recommended to be careful during this time. Here are steps that you and your family can do to help lower the risk of infection:

• Do not travel out of province. The risk of exposure to COVID-19 during travel outside Manitoba continues to increase.
• Wash your hands often with soap and water. Wash for at least 20 seconds. Dry your hands completely. If you do not have soap, you can use alcohol hand sanitizer if your hands are not visibly dirty.
• Wash your hands:
• Before, during and after making meals
• Before eating
• After using the toilet
• When your hands are dirty
• Cover your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing. Use a tissue or your sleeve. Throw tissues you have used in the garbage and wash your hands right away.
• Try not to touch your eyes, nose and mouth.
• Do not shake hands or give hugs.
• Do not share items such as drinking glasses, spoons/forks or tooth brushes.
• Clean (disinfect) surfaces such as phones, computer, tables, chairs, countertops, door knobs.
• Stay away from people who are sick.
• Avoid crowded places.

CancerCare Manitoba and Shared Health are closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation. If you have any questions or concerns about your risk of COVID-19, please talk to your healthcare team or call CancerCare Manitoba at 1-855-837-5400 (Hours: Monday to Friday 8am-6pm and Weekends 8am-4pm).

CancerCare Manitoba visit https://www.cancercare.mb.ca (https://www.cancercare.mb.ca/).

Sincerely,

CancerCare Manitoba