

COVID-19

COVID-19 FAQs for Stem Cell Transplant Patients

June 16, 2020

At Dana-Farber, your health and safety, along with the health and safety of our staff, are our top priorities during the COVID-19 pandemic. We understand this situation causes tremendous anxiety, especially for cancer patients and their loved ones. We are here for you. Here, we have answered some frequently asked questions for our stem cell transplant patients. This information is based on current policies and is subject to change as the situation changes.

Will I be able to get my transplant?

Every individual's situation is unique and your doctor will determine the best treatment approach for you.

If my transplant is postponed, when will it be rescheduled?

For some patients, it is safe to postpone their transplant. If your transplant date is postponed, we will continue to monitor your condition and determine when it is appropriate and safe to move forward with your transplant.

Do I need to take extra precautions?

Yes. We recommend that you quarantine in your home for the 14 days prior to your transplant in order to reduce your risk of infection. In addition, we recommend following the precautions you would normally follow to prevent infection:

1. Wash your hands.
2. Avoid people who are ill, especially those with a cough, fever, or other cold and flu symptoms.
3. Take your medicines as prescribed.
4. Wear a mask when outside your home.
5. Avoid gatherings, even small gatherings of people.
6. Call your doctor if you have a fever, cough, or cold. Notify your care team about these symptoms before visiting the clinic for an appointment.

What if I experience symptoms and/or test positive for COVID-19? Will I still be able to have my transplant?

If you experience symptoms or test positive for COVID-19, we would delay your transplant until your symptoms resolve and you have two negative COVID-19 tests.

What if my caregiver is exposed to coronavirus?

If your caregiver is exposed to coronavirus, contact your provider for guidance on what precautions you should take to stay safe. During the COVID pandemic, we recommend identifying another person who could be your caregiver if your primary caregiver becomes ill.

I need to stay at a hotel during/after my transplant. Is it safe to do so?

It is ok for you to stay at a hotel if needed during/after your transplant. We do recommend you take extra steps to stay safe during this time:

1. Make arrangements with the hotel to restrict housekeeping from entering your room. This will limit your potential for exposure by limiting the number of people in your room. You can request that cleaned bed linens and towels be left outside your door each day.
2. Bring cleaning supplies (wipes, hand sanitizer, etc.) with you to disinfect your room daily.
3. [Refer to this list of foods](#) that are safe during your hotel stay. (Password if prompted: dfci)

What extra precautions should my caregivers and I take after my transplant?

Because your immune system will be recovering after stem cell transplant, it is very important that you limit your potential exposure to COVID-19. We recommend staying in your home as much as possible. If you leave the home, wear a mask and gloves and follow the appropriate social distancing guidelines. In addition, do not have visitors to your home, as they increase your risk for exposure.

It is also important that you follow the other standard post-transplant precautions for what you eat and drink, taking medications, and staying safe at home.

Are visitors permitted to be with me during my transplant?

In our ongoing effort to protect the health and safety of our patients and staff, no visitors are currently permitted with adult patients in Dana-Farber's outpatient clinics. When possible, we encourage you to use your smartphone or other mobile device to stay in touch with your loved ones during your appointment.

If you are admitted to Brigham and Women's Hospital or Dana-Farber's Inpatient Hospital located at BWH for your transplant, you may have one visitor for up to 2 hours between 1 to 8 pm. All visitors will be screened for symptoms of possible COVID-19 infection, and no visitors with any symptoms or active COVID-19 infection will be permitted. Visitors will be required to wear a hospital-issued mask at all times while in the hospital and perform hand hygiene upon entry to the facility.

Should I get tested for coronavirus?

You do not need to get tested if you are not experiencing any symptoms such as cough, fever, cold or flu like symptoms.

All patients receiving a stem cell transplant during this time will be tested for COVID-19 upon their admission to the hospital. If you are receiving an outpatient transplant, you will be tested for COVID-19 24 hours prior to starting chemotherapy.

In addition, you will receive a call from your oncology nurse navigator 24 to 48 hours in advance of your admission to either setting to screen you for COVID-19 symptoms.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call your oncology nurse navigator at 617-632-6256.

For more information:

[General COVID-19 Information](#)

[Dana-Farber's FAQ for Patients](#)

[Dana-Farber's Information for Caregivers of Cancer Patients](#)

[National Marrow Donor Program/Be the Match](#)