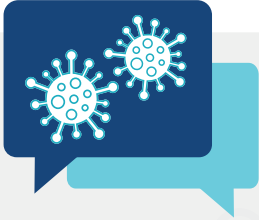




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Pediatric Oncology Nursing during COVID-19



How Does COVID-19 Affect Children with Cancer? ^{1, 5, 8}

Children, generally, do not seem to be as vulnerable to COVID-19 as adults. However, children with cancer are thought to be vulnerable due to their immunocompromised state. Importantly, **it is not yet known how frequently or severely children with cancer will be affected by COVID-19.**

How Can I Protect My Patients? ^{1, 3}



The virus that causes COVID-19 is spread through the droplets of infected people, whether or not they are symptomatic.

The **best protection is through interventions that decrease the risk of transmission:**

- Frequent hand hygiene.
- Proper use of personal protective equipment.
- Physical distancing measures.

There are **no medications known to prevent COVID-19.**

Other ways to protect your patients:

- Guidance on hand hygiene, infection prevention, and physical distancing at home.
- Limit or decrease length of clinic appointments.
- Screen patients and families by phone and before entry to hospital.
- Limit caregivers to one per patient.
- Siblings and other family members should not visit at this time. Special arrangements may be needed for children nearing the end-of-life, or newly diagnosed or relapsed patients.
- **Strict isolation** for any patients with known or suspected COVID-19 infection.



What Are the Recommendations for Staffing? ^{2, 4, 7}

- Nurses caring for neutropenic patients **SHOULD NOT** care for patients with suspected/confirmed COVID-19.
- If nurses are exposed to COVID-19, they should not care for neutropenic patients for 14 days.
- Nurses who have **tested positive for COVID-19 should not return to work for 14 days and should be cleared with two negative swabs** (per CDC recommendations).
- Refreshers or **training for any nurses who are asked to rotate or re-deploy** to another area to help manage patient surges.



What Are the Recommendations for Chemotherapy Administration? ^{6, 9}

- Use **PPE that is adequate for both chemotherapy administration and protection from COVID-19.**
- Strategies to optimize PPE during chemotherapy handling may be needed in order to conserve PPE
- Examples of **interim guidelines** (from the Oncology Nursing Society) include:
 - Using a mask with face and eye protection only if splashing is likely or for cleaning spills.
 - Reusing a single gown for a single patient.
 - Having one nurse perform all disconnections/take-down of chemotherapy.
 - Using gloves only for lower hazardous-risk drugs.⁹

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Where Can I Get More Information?

Information will be continually updated as it becomes available at the Global COVID-19 Observatory and Resource Center for Childhood Cancer (<http://covid19childhoodcancer.org>)

Information for patients and families can be found at www.together.stjude.org

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