

COVID-19 advice for volunteer drivers who work with people with cancer

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus. We are still learning how it works. This is an evolving situation and this advice is based on current information.

There are some groups of people who are more at risk of serious illness if they catch COVID-19, e.g. people over 70 years of age and people with long-term illnesses.

You can check the most up-to-date advice for those who might be at increased risk from COVID-19 at: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/covid19/people-at-higher-risk/>. Remember, it is okay if you decide this is not the right time for you to be volunteering.

You should not volunteer with cancer patients if:

- You have any symptoms of possible COVID-19, such as cough, shortness of breath, fever, change or loss of your sense of taste or smell. If you experience these symptoms, you should [self-isolate](#) and phone your GP.
- You have been informed that you are a 'close contact' of someone with COVID-19 (COVID-19), you may need to [restrict your movements](#) for 14 days and get tested for COVID-19, depending on your COVID-19 vaccination status. A member of the contact tracing team will advise you what to do when they phone you. Further information for close contacts can be found [here](#).
- You have been to any country outside the island of Ireland in the last 14 days and are currently [self-quarantining](#) as a result. Up to date information and advice for those travelling to Ireland during the COVID-19 pandemic can be found at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/77952-government-advice-on-international-travel/#travelling-to-ireland>.

This advice is particularly important for volunteers working with cancer patients currently on treatment, as they may be at higher risk of severe illness.

Follow these steps to [protect yourself from COVID-19](#) and to help prevent the spread of the virus:

- [Wash your hands properly and often](#) with soap and water or alcohol hand rub
- Cover your cough with a tissue, dispose of the tissue, and wash your hands
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surface
- Avoid close contact with people - keep at least 1-2 metres between you and others

- Wear face coverings in indoor public places, such as shops and on public transport. For advice see - <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/face-masks-disposable-gloves.html>
- Avail of the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it is offered to you, as long as there is no clinical reason why you should not have it. More information can be found at: <https://www2.hse.ie/screening-and-vaccinations/covid-19-vaccine/>
- Follow national advice on limiting the number of people you meet, either in your own home or outside
- Avoid crowded spaces, especially indoors
- Avoid contact with anyone who is ill with a cough or difficulty breathing
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth
- Do not share objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups
- Do not shake hands
- [Follow up to date travel advice from the Department of Foreign Affairs](#)

Protecting yourself and the person you are driving

The most important steps you can take are those above. Reducing your own risk of getting COVID-19 will reduce your chances of passing it on to someone else. Follow this advice as strictly as possible and encourage others to follow this advice too.

Extra steps are needed to protect those currently on cancer treatment, over 70 years of age, or with a chronic health condition. It is really important to reduce their chances of coming into contact with someone with COVID-19.

This is what you can do to protect yourself and your passenger if you are a volunteer driver of a cancer patient:

Do

- ✓ Volunteer services should contact the patient in advance for you, to make sure they are well and don't have any symptoms of COVID-19 and to remind the patient to wash their hands with soap and water before leaving home
- ✓ Keep a space of at least 1 metre between yourself and the patient (passengers should sit in the back seat away from the driver) and wear a face covering
- ✓ Wash your hands properly and often
- ✓ Clean frequently touched sites, for example, car door handles, seat belts and buckles
- ✓ Use the Irish Cancer Society Resources, which can be found at the following link: <https://www.cancer.ie/cancer-information-and-support/coronavirus-and-cancer-info-for-patients-families-volunteers>

Don't

- × Do not shake hands
- × Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth

- × Do not enter the hospital building if possible, to help with spacing between patients
- × Do not volunteer to help if you have any symptoms of COVID-19 or you have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

Stay up to date, check the www.hse.ie - [HSE COVID-19 page](#)

Last updated 30/08/2021 please see www.hse.ie/coronavirus