

Chatham-Kent Health Alliance Cancer Clinic COVID-19 – Frequently Asked Questions

This information about COVID-19 is specific to patients and visitors of the Cancer Clinic at Chatham-Kent Health Alliance.

For more general information about COVID-19, how to protect yourself and loved ones during this time and hospital policy changes from Chatham-Kent Health Alliance, please visit the following web address: <http://www.ckha.on.ca/covid-19-information>.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) and cancer: What you need to know

You may be worried about Coronavirus (COVID-19) and have questions about how the pandemic will affect you and your cancer care.

- Coronavirus or COVID-19 is a virus that can be more dangerous than the common cold or flu.
- As a person with cancer, you may be at a higher risk of getting seriously ill from a COVID-19 infection. Cancer and some cancer treatments may weaken your immune system.
- You may be tested for COVID-19 during your visit to a hospital or Cancer Clinic due to symptoms or as a precaution.
- COVID-19 may cause very mild symptoms (such as a cough) to severe pneumonia (lung infection). Severe symptoms can be life-threatening and need to be treated at the hospital.
- It is important for people with cancer, as well as their family, friends and caregivers, to know how to keep themselves safe during this pandemic.

How does COVID-19 affect my cancer journey?

Appointment Changes

1. How will my cancer care change during this time?

In order to keep you and your family safe during this time, your cancer care team may make changes to your care plan. They may:

- Call you to change the date of your next appointment.
- Change an in-person appointment to be over the telephone or a video conference.

- Change how often you have your treatment or postpone it until later.
- Change you to a different treatment (such as a different type of chemotherapy).
- Change how often you have radiation treatment.
- Change your scheduled scan or diagnostic test.
- Adjust your palliative or end-of-life care and appointments.

Your care team is carefully monitoring all your upcoming appointments and reviewing your care plan to ensure any changes made are safe for you.

- To protect our patients and keep our workforce as safe as possible, we are only keeping appointments at the Cancer Clinic that cannot be safely delayed.
- You will be contacted by phone to inform you of any changes.
- If you have questions about the status of your appointment please contact your cancer care team by calling **519-352-6401 ext. 6682**.

2. If I am coming into the Cancer Clinic for an appointment, can I bring my family member or caregiver?

In alignment with hospital policy to keep all our patients and staff safe, no visitors are allowed into the Cancer Clinic.

- Should you require an exception due to mobility, language or cognitive reasons, please call the Cancer Clinic prior to your appointment.
- All requests will be carefully reviewed on a case by case basis and exceptions granted based on need.

3. If I was scheduled for a diagnostic scan, will my appointment be cancelled?

- All appointments for diagnostic tests (CT scan, mammogram, etc.) are being reviewed by your Cancer Doctor and care team to determine whether it would be safe to proceed or defer.
- It is possible your test may be delayed or cancelled.
- We will make every effort to have your scan done as quickly and safely possible, despite the current circumstances.
- If you have a change in symptoms, please call to be re-assessed.

4. If I was scheduled for a surgery, will my surgery be cancelled?

All upcoming surgeries are being reviewed by your Surgeon and the cancer care team to determine whether it

would be safe to proceed or defer. It is possible your surgery may be delayed or cancelled.

At the moment, hospitals and surgeons are prioritizing surgeries to ensure patients with cancer whose lives are in immediate threat, or whose prognosis would be significantly impacted if the surgery was delayed, receive the care they need.

- Your surgeon will contact you if your surgery date is impacted.
- Your surgeon will reschedule when they are able to safely perform the surgery.
- While your surgery is postponed, we will closely watch your health and any changes to your cancer.

5. How is my care impacted if I receive my treatment in Windsor or Sarnia?

As a patient receiving cancer treatment in the Erie St. Clair region at one of our satellite sites (Bluewater Health and Windsor Regional Hospital), the recommendations above apply to your care.

All partner organizations are taking similar precautions as the Cancer Clinic on limiting access, restricting the number of visitors at their hospital, and screening at entrance points. However, we strongly encourage you to speak with a member of your care team at your treatment site for specific questions.

Who can I speak to about my symptoms?

1. What should I do if I am not feeling well?

If you are a cancer patient, call your cancer care team first if you have any of the symptoms below:

- Fever over 38 C (100.4 F)
- Cough
- Mild difficulty breathing
- Achy muscles
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Runny nose

Please do not visit a public COVID-19 Assessment Centre without speaking to your care team first.

Contact Information:

Organization	Phone Number	Hours (Monday – Friday)
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Windsor Regional Cancer Centre	519-253-5253	8:30 am – 4:00 pm
Bluewater Health Cancer Clinic	519-464-4400 ext. 5517	8:00 am – 4:00 pm
Chatham-Kent Health Alliance Cancer Clinic	519-352-6401 ext. 6682	8:00 am – 4:00 pm

2. Can I speak to someone after hours?

After Hours Contact:

- If you are a patient on active treatment, have symptoms after 4:00 pm, and need help right away, please call **CAREpath at 1-877-681-3057** to speak to a specialized cancer care nurse.
- **If you are not currently receiving treatment**, or if you are unable to speak with your cancer care team, call your Primary Care Provider (Family Doctor or Nurse Practitioner) or Telehealth Ontario at **1-866-797-0000**.
- For a list of the most current symptoms, please visit the **Ontario Health symptom management page**. (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-self-assessment>)

Please call 911 if you are having severe symptoms such as feeling like you cannot breathe.

When Arriving at the Cancer Clinic

VISITOR POLICY

1. As a patient on cancer treatment, am I allowed to bring a family member or friend with me?

- No visitors are allowed at this time.
- Make arrangements to be dropped off and picked up for your appointment.
- If your loved one needs the support of translation services, tell your care team.
- If you or your loved one require help getting around the Cancer Clinic, a staff member will help you or your loved one get from one area to the next.
- If you require an exception due to mobility, language or cognitive reasons, please call the Cancer Clinic at 519-352-6401 ext. 6682 prior to your appointment. All requests will be carefully reviewed on a case by case basis and exceptions will be granted based on need.

Ask your health care team if it is okay to phone or video call your family members, friends or care givers during your visit or stay. This is a great way to include them in your visit and have an extra person to listen to the

discussion. You can use the CKHA WiFi network for **free**.

ENTERING

2. Where do I enter the hospital for my cancer care?

- Public entrances continue to be limited to the main entrance at the Chatham Site, and the Emergency Department (ED) at the Wallaceburg Site.
- The ED entrance at the Chatham Site is for emergency patients only.

Please arrive at the main Chatham Site entrance if you are coming for:

- Your treatment appointments
- An appointment with your Cancer Doctor
- A diagnostic test related to your cancer care
- A lab test related to your cancer care

SCREENING

3. What are you doing to protect us from possible infection when we come for a visit?

- We are taking caution by limiting the number of people on site and restricting access to the Cancer Clinic.
- We are working closely with our Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) team to ensure the best practices are maintained to protect our patients, visitors and staff.
- This includes cleaning surfaces using rules recommended by IPAC, limiting visitors, active screening in place at all entrances and using proper personal protective equipment (like masks and gowns) when needed.

4. As a patient on cancer treatment, what should I know before I arrive at the Cancer Clinic for an appointment?

- Know that before entering the building all employees and professional staff are screened for any potential symptoms or exposure to COVID-19.
- You will be also be screened at the entrance of the Cancer Clinic.

- Screening might include answering some questions about how you are feeling.

Physical distancing:

- You will notice that all waiting areas in the Cancer Clinic have been re-arranged to allow for physical distancing.
- Please practice physical distancing by staying 2 metres (6 feet) away from others.
- Do not touch common surfaces (such as door handles and elevator buttons) with your bare hands.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer often and especially if you have touched anything in the hospital.

MASKS

5. Do I need to wear a mask while at the Cancer Clinic?

- When you arrive at the Cancer Clinic, you will be given a reusable cloth mask if you do not show symptoms. You will be asked to wear this mask every time you come to the Cancer Clinic.
- If you do have symptoms, you will be asked to wear a surgical mask while at the Cancer Clinic and assessed further.

COVID-19 TESTING

6. As a cancer patient, will I be tested for COVID-19?

- Cancer patients coming into the Cancer Centre for appointments will be tested in accordance with provincial and hospital policies. If the test is appropriate for you, you will be provided with the required information.
- The test involves the insertion of a cotton tipped swab into your nostril to collect a sample from the back of the nose and throat.
- The test is a little uncomfortable and only takes a few seconds.
- You will receive a call from Public Health with your results (whether they are negative or positive).
- This testing of all patients will help us slow the spread of this virus and keep you and our community safe.

7. Can I still have my cancer treatment if I screen positive for COVID-19?

- All decisions about your cancer treatment will be made on a case-by-case basis by your Cancer Doctor and care team.
- If you test positive for COVID-19 and require treatment, all necessary precautions will be taken, as per our policies, to ensure your treatment is delivered in a safe manner to protect you and our staff.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. I can't get through on the phone to the Cancer Clinic. What do I do?

We are receiving a large amount of calls. We understand that long waits on the phone or being unable to get through is frustrating during this uncertain time.

Please continue to bear with us as our staff work to answer all your questions. Thank you for your patience.

- If you are a patient on active treatment and experiencing a symptom after 4:00 pm and need help with your symptoms right away, please call **CAREpath at 1-877-681-3057** to speak to a specialized cancer care nurse.
- If you have general questions about COVID-19, please visit the **CKHA website** (<http://www.ckha.on.ca/covid-19-information>) or call **Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000**.

2. I am experiencing a lot of stress and anxiety about COVID-19 and this is affecting my cancer care. What should I do?

It is completely normal to feel nervous or worried during this time particularly if your cancer treatment plan has changed. Knowing this and paying attention to your mental health is important.

If you require support to help you through this difficult time and are a patient with the Windsor Regional Cancer Centre receiving treatment at the Chatham-Kent Health Alliance Cancer Clinic, please call the **Windsor Regional Cancer Centre at 519-253-5253**. We have an expert team of social workers dedicated helping you during these difficult times.

If you are a patient with the London Regional Cancer Program and receiving treatment at the Chatham-Kent Health Alliance Cancer Clinic, you may access social work services by contacting the **Chatham-Kent Health Alliance Cancer Clinic at 519-352-6401, ext. 6682**. We will connect you with a social worker in Chatham or Windsor to assist you.

Stress during an infectious disease outbreak can include:

- fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- changes in sleeping or eating patterns
- difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- worsening of chronic health problems
- increased use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs

Taking care of yourself, your friends and your family can help you cope with stress.

Things you can do to support yourself:

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic often can be upsetting.
- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Make time to relax. Do things you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

LAB

1. As an active Cancer Clinic patient, where can I complete my lab work?

Lab services remain the same.

- Location: Chatham-Kent Health Alliance, Wallaceburg Site
- Hours: 8:00 am – 2:00 pm, Monday – Friday, excluding holidays

Lab visits outside of regular hours can be accommodated on an as needed basis. If you have any questions, please call the Cancer Clinic at 519-325-6401 ext. 6682.

PHARMACY

1. Is the Chatham-Kent Health Alliance Pharmacy (Elston's Pharmacy) open?

- Yes, the pharmacy is still open.

If you have any questions, please call:

- Chatham-Kent Health Alliance: 519-352-6401 ext. 6682

2. Can I still access my local or community pharmacy outside of the Cancer Clinic?

Yes, community pharmacies are still open.

3. When should I call if I need a refill on a prescription?

- Call your pharmacy a week before your current supply runs out.
- You do not need to call your Cancer Doctor to order a refill.
- Your Pharmacist will be in touch with your Cancer Doctor at the Cancer Clinic to refill your prescription.
- Your pharmacy can deliver the medication when it is ready for you.

4. How much medicine should I keep on hand?

- At this time, you do not need to ask for extra refills or early refills.
- You will be dispensed a **30-day supply at a time** to ensure that there are no medication shortages because of stockpiling of medicines.
- If you need your prescription delivered, please contact your dispensing pharmacy to ask about delivery options.
- Elston's Pharmacy is also currently delivering medication.

RECEIVING TREATMENT AT HOME

1. Should I continue to receive care in my home from my home or community nurse?

- If you have arrangements to see a home or community nurse at your home, please keep these arrangements. This is a safer way to ensure your continued care. Please do not cancel any of your home care appointments until you speak to a members of your care team at the Cancer Clinic.
- Like all healthcare organizations, the LHIN Homecare Service (formerly CCAC) is taking precautions to ensure their nurses and patients remain safe during this time.
- If you have any issues, questions or concerns about your home care, please contact **LHIN Homecare Services at 519-258-8211** and ask to speak to your **Care Coordinator** who will be able to respond appropriately.

- If you have any trouble getting through, please call the **Cancer Clinic at Cancer Clinic at 519-352-6401 ext. 6682** and we will help as best we can.

2. Is it safe to delay a port flush during this time?

- Your cancer care team will let you know if you can delay flushing your port.
- If you can delay flushing your port, your appointment at the Cancer Clinic or with your home nurse to flush your port will be adjusted as needed.

3. What should I do with my disconnected pump?

- Store the disconnected pump in the biohazardous bag you were provided.
- Keep it in a safe place until your next appointment at the Cancer Clinic.
- Bring the biohazardous bag with the pump inside to your next appointment at the Cancer Clinic.