

The IGHG and Cochrane Childhood Cancer are carefully monitoring the rapidly emerging medical information about COVID-19 and will update this guidance as new information becomes available. See www.ighg.org for future updates of this statement.

Purpose



The purpose of this statement is to provide guidance to childhood, adolescent and young adult cancer survivors related to risk and additional preventive measures for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). For this guidance, childhood, adolescent and young adult cancer survivors are defined as individuals of any age who were diagnosed with cancer before age 25 years and are at least one year following completion of primary cancer therapy.

Knowledge



Survivors, their caregivers, and health care providers should be mindful that the risk and course of COVID-19 in childhood, adolescent and young adult cancer survivors is not currently known. Thus, the information provided in this guidance is largely extrapolated from medical information from national health services and the World Health Organization (WHO) about COVID-19 in the general population.

Recommendation 1

Who

is at



higher risk?

Based on medical information about COVID-19 in the general population, cancer survivors with the specific health conditions below may have a higher risk for a severe course of COVID-19, especially if they have more than one of these conditions.

In addition to these comorbid conditions, a more severe course has been observed in older individuals, especially those 60 years of age or older, which may be because older individuals are more likely to have the chronic health conditions listed in the table. Individuals with conditions and/or use of drugs that affect immune system function may also be at risk for a more severe course of COVID-19 because of their overall higher risk of infection.

Conditions ¹ most frequently identified by national health services and WHO to increase risk for a severe course of COVID-19	Examples of cancer treatment-related conditions that may increase a childhood, adolescent and young adult cancer survivor's risk for a severe course of COVID-19
Heart disease, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heart failure requiring medication History of myocardial infarction (heart attack) 	Heart disease, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cardiomyopathy (heart muscle disease) following anthracycline therapy Coronary artery disease following chest radiation
Chronic lung disorders, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) Severe asthma Any lung disease causing chronic shortness of breath, difficulty breathing or requiring oxygen therapy 	Chronic lung disorders, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lung fibrosis (scarring) following bleomycin or chest radiation Chronic lung disease after bone marrow transplant
Diabetes	Diabetes following radiation to abdomen or pancreas
Conditions and/or use of drugs that affect immune system function, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anticancer treatment Organ transplantation Immune disorders 	Conditions and/or use of drugs that affect immune system function, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing treatment for a new or recurrent cancer History of organ transplant because of cancer or damage from cancer treatment (for heart, kidney or liver) Chronic graft versus host disease

¹ The following conditions/factors, which have been reported to increase risk for a severe course of COVID-19, were less frequently mentioned by national health services or medical reports: kidney disease, hypertension, liver disease, obesity, pregnancy, blood disorders, neurological dysfunction, asplenia, hyposplenia, high BMI, male sex, and use of ACE inhibitors or ibuprofen. The IGHG and Cochrane Childhood Cancer will monitor the medical literature about all of these conditions/factors and revise recommendations as new information becomes available. The higher risk of secondary bacterial infections should be considered for survivors with asplenia and hyposplenia.

Recommendation 2

What Measures

should be taken by survivors?



All childhood, adolescent and young adult cancer survivors should adhere to recommendations, like social distancing, frequent hand washing, etc, as advised by national and/or local authorities.

Recommendation 3

What additional measures

should be taken by survivors at high risk?



Survivors at higher risk of a severe course of COVID-19 (as described in the above list) should:

- Continue to practice strict social distancing, frequent handwashing, etc, as advised by national and/or local authorities.
- For a small number of survivors, this may necessitate continuing social isolation or shielding as advised by your doctor and/or national and/or local authorities.
- Request reassignment to remote work activities (for you and for household members if possible) if your work is typically performed in public spaces.
- Encourage household members who are visiting or working in public spaces to take extra care to avoid exposure and transmission of COVID-19.
- Take extra care to avoid exposure to household members who have symptoms or have been diagnosed with COVID-19.
 - Isolate ill household members in the home or move to another location if possible.
 - If isolation or relocation is not possible, have ill household members wear masks.
 - Increase the frequency of hand washing and cleaning of hard surfaces with disinfectants.

Recommendation 4

What should be done by a survivor at high risk, who is ill?



Survivors at higher risk of a severe course of COVID-19 should:

- Seek medical advice early if you develop symptoms that could be related to COVID-19.
- Alert health care providers about your cancer history and other health conditions that have been linked to higher risk for a severe course of COVID-19.
- Call your doctor or emergency department for instructions if your symptoms worsen (e.g., fever, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, confusion, etc...) and you feel you need to be evaluated.

Recommendation 5

What are other effects of the COVID-19 pandemic?



Survivors, parents and siblings :

- Be aware that changes and uncertainty caused by the pandemic may cause increased stress, anxiety, and other emotional effects.
- Follow coping strategies recommended by national/local health organizations f.e. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-the-public-on-the-mental-health-and-wellbeing-aspects-of-coronavirus-covid-19> Or <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>
- Contact local mental health services if you need help dealing with distress, anxiety, or other emotional concerns.

IGHG: International Late Effects of Childhood Cancer Guideline Harmonization Group (www.ighg.org)

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Notes

Summary of risk factors for severe course of COVID-19 in the general population, reported in medical information from 15 national health services and the World Health Organization (WHO):

n=16 Older age (GER, AUT, WHO, CZ, US, CH, CAN, BE, UK, NL, IT, FR, SE, AUS, China, JP)

n=14 Diabetes (UK, CH, WHO, IT, FR, CZ, AUT, AUS, BE, US, NL, JP, GER, SE)

n=14 Heart disease (UK, NL, CZ, AUT, BE, US, CH, GER, AUS, WHO, JP, SE, IT, FR)

n=14 Lung disease (UK, US, NL, BE, CH, IT, CZ, GER, AUS, WHO, AUT, SE, FR, JP)

n=13 Active Cancer treatment (UK, NL, CH, WHO, GER, AUT, AUS, IT, FR, BE, JP, CZ, SE)

n=11 Immune disorders or organ transplant (UK, SE, US, NL, CH, GER, AUT, FR, JP, BE, AUS)

n=10 Kidney disease (UK, AUT, SE, NL, BE, IT, FR, US, CZ, JP)

n=9 High blood pressure (CH, WHO, IT, JP, CZ, GER, AUT, SE, FR)

n=8 Liver disease (UK, GER, AUT, SE, US, IT, FR, NL)

n=6 Pregnant women (UK, US, WHO, AUS, SE, FR)

n=6 Overweight (UK, US, FR, IT, CZ, NL)

n=4 Hematological (blood) disease (UK, US, NL, BE)

n=3 Chronic neurological condition (UK, IT, JP)

n=3 Problems with the spleen (UK, SE, NL)

n=3 Smoking (GER, US, JP)

n=1 Males (IT)

AUS= Australia, AUT=Austria, BE=Belgium, CAN=Canada, CZ=Czech Republic, FR=France, GER= Germany, China=China, CH=Switzerland, IT=Italy, JP=Japan, NL=Netherlands, SE=Sweden, UK=United Kingdom, US=United States of America