

COVID-19

Frequently Asked Questions

For children with compromised immunity

Information last updated 14/05/2020

This is a changing landscape and this guidance will be updated as appropriate. Please refer to [SA Health Website](#) for the most up to date information.

How might coronavirus affect my immunocompromised child?

Data currently seems to show that the infection is milder in children than in adults. However, children and young people undergoing cancer treatment have a weakened immune system which will make it harder for the body to fight off infections such as COVID-19.

It is important for children undergoing cancer treatment or with compromised immunity, and their families, follow steps to protect themselves where possible.

Should my immunocompromised child stay home from school?

The Paediatric Haematology and Oncology team at WCH now recommend that all children who were well enough to attend school prior to COVID-19 restrictions, should now return to school.

This means that almost all children receiving chemotherapy or who have recently completed chemotherapy can now return to school. Please talk with your doctor about your specific circumstances or concerns.

ANZCHOG recommendation for chemotherapy patients

The national professional group, Australian and New Zealand Children's Haematology and Oncology Group (ANZCHOG) previously recommended to keep children on chemotherapy, within 3 months of finishing chemotherapy or 6 months from a bone marrow transplantation to stay home from school.

ANZCHOG is now recommending a return to school for most patients based on the declining number of COVID-19 cases, the lower risk of spread and disease in children and the safe re-opening of schools which closed during term 1. You can read the ANZCHOG recommendations [here](#).

What should I do if my child develops a fever or any other symptoms?

Should your child develop fever, chills or signs of acute respiratory infection (e.g. cough, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath, or loss of taste and smell), they can present for [testing](#) at a COVID-19 clinic.

If your child has an upcoming appointment at the hospital and has respiratory or fever symptoms, please contact your treating clinician or hospital switch on 8161 7000 to reschedule.

Call the 24/7 Coronavirus Health Information Line for further advice on 1800 020 080.

If you are severely unwell, such as having difficulty breathing, call 000 (Triple Zero).



For more information

Michael Rice Centre for Haematology and Oncology
Women's and Children's Hospital
72 King William Rd, North Adelaide SA 5006
Telephone (08) 8161 7225



www.ausgoal.gov.au/creative-commons



Government
of South Australia
Women's and Children's
Health Network



Women's
& Children's
Hospital

How does COVID-19 affect children taking immune suppression medicines?

There is currently no evidence from overseas that children or young people taking immunosuppressive medications are at higher risk of becoming very unwell, although this is possible.

The issues are similar to the annual wave of flu infections.

Currently there is no specific treatment or vaccine for coronavirus.

Will the supply of my child's medications be affected by COVID-19?

The pharmacy department has been looking at its supply chains to ensure a secure supply of necessary drugs. There is an action plan in place to manage the supply of medicines in Australia.

Whilst this situation may change, currently there are no shortages linked to coronavirus and no drug manufacturers have said they expect problems with supply due to coronavirus.

What else can we do to protect our family?

It's important that you stay otherwise well and avoid illness wherever possible.

This can be achieved by washing your hands, wiping down surfaces and practicing social distancing.

We also recommend all family members receive their flu vaccination.

Flu vaccinations will not protect against COVID-19.

What if I have some more questions?

Please speak to your child's consultant or any member of their care team.

You can also visit the [SA Health Website](#) or call the Australian Government Department of Health Coronavirus Hotline on 1800 020 080.

