

**DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL ONCOLOGY**

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Dear Patient,

This is our guidance for patients with lymphoproliferative disease, or with a history of previously treated lymphoproliferative disease, addressing your risk of SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19). This is to help you make decisions regarding government advice on self-isolation.

The situation is fluid, guidance will likely change and you will be updated.

If you are on active immunosuppressive therapy for another condition, then please contact your managing team for advice. If you have other chronic health conditions, again please contact your managing team for advice. For lymphoma patients who have had stem cell transplants, again please ask your transplant team for up-to-date advice.

You should also read “One Cancer Voice: Guidance for patients with cancer” on SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) - <https://lymphoma-action.org.uk/advice-coronavirus-people-cancer>.

We are aware that Public Health England has categorised many of you as extremely vulnerable, and many of you will have received letters (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>). You were identified through your GP practice.

While the guidance helps ensure all at risk patients are identified, it is however not necessarily applicable to all. For lymphoma patients, the advice applies to those who are at any stage of treatment, are considered to be at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

This includes people before, during and after treatment.

- **Before treatment:**
  - people who are on active monitoring (watch and wait) for low-grade lymphoma.
- **During treatment:**
  - people who are currently having treatment for lymphoma. (Patients on treatment should follow the standard neutropenic sepsis pathways and telephone for clinical advice as stated by chemotherapy unit prior to commencing treatment.)
- **After treatment:**
  - people who are within 2 years of finishing treatment, or longer if ongoing recurrent infections.

Our professional view on the risk stratification is below, however this is only guidance and we cannot offer an individualised risk assessment to all. If you fall into more than one category, the highest risk category is the one applicable to you.

	Severe risk	Moderate risk	Low/ No risk
Patient having chemotherapy, or who have received chemotherapy in the last 2 years  (The more time elapsed since chemotherapy, the less likely there is risk)	•		

Patient completed <u>curative</u> chemotherapy more than 2 years ago and you remain in remission.			•
Patient completed <u>non-curative</u> chemotherapy more than 2 years – and is without active disease  (The more time elapsed since chemotherapy, the less likely there is risk)		•	
Patient completed <u>palliative</u> chemotherapy more than 2 years	•		
Patients with secondary immunodeficiency due to chemotherapy and is on active IVIG replacement and/or antibiotic prophylaxis	•		
Patients with previous secondary immunodeficiency needing IVIG with now normal IgG levels.			•
People having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer e.g. Rituximab or Obinutuzumab maintenance	•		
People having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors e.g. Ibrutinib, Idelalisib, Venetoclax	•		
Untreated CLL (Chronic Lymphocytic Leukaemia)	•		
Untreated indolent lymphoma on active surveillance	•		

Evidence Source:

1. <https://lymphoma-action.org.uk/advice-coronavirus-people-cancer>
2. <https://lymphoma-action.org.uk/about-lymphoma-covid-19-and-lymphoma/guidance-shielding-people-who-have-lymphoma>
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

## **What is shielding?**

Shielding is a way of protecting people who are at risk of severe illness from COVID-19 by minimising their interaction with other people. This reduces their chance of coming into contact with the virus.

If you are considered to be at high risk, you should not leave your home. Within your home, you should minimise all non-essential contact with other members of your household.

If you think you have a condition that puts you at very high risk, or you have received a letter from the NHS advising you to shield yourself, you are strongly advised to follow the face-to-face distancing measures below:

Strictly avoid contact with anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19). These symptoms include high temperature (above 37.8°C or 100°F) and/or new and continuous cough.

- Do not leave your house.
- Do not attend any gatherings. This includes gatherings of friends and families in private spaces.
- Do not go out for shopping, leisure or travel. If you are having food or medication delivered, make sure they are left at the door to minimise contact.
- Keep in touch remotely with other people using technology such as your phone, internet, and social media.
- Use telephone or online services to contact your GP or other essential services.
- Wash your hands regularly, avoid touching your face, and clean frequently-touched surfaces regularly.

If you share a living space with other people, you should also minimise your contact with them.

- Aim to keep at least 2 metres (3 steps) away from people you live with.
- Keep the time you spend in shared spaces such as kitchens, bathrooms and sitting areas to a minimum, and keep these spaces well ventilated.
- If you usually share a bed with someone else, encourage them to sleep in a different bed if this is possible.

- If you can, use a separate bathroom from the rest of the household. If you do share a toilet or bathroom with other people, make sure they are cleaned after use every time. Use separate towels from the other people in your house.
- If you share a kitchen with other people, avoid using it while they are present. If you can, take your meals back to your room to eat. Make sure all used crockery and cutlery are thoroughly washed and dried, in a dishwasher if you have one. If you are using separate crockery, cutlery and utensils from the rest of the household, remember to use a separate tea towel for drying these.
- Encourage everyone in your household to wash their hands regularly, avoid touching their face, and clean frequently-touched surfaces.

You should follow this advice for at least 12 weeks from the day you receive your letter.

Other sources of information you may find helpful include;

#### General

<https://bloodwise.org.uk/blog/coronavirus-and-blood-cancer>

#### Lymphoma

<https://lymphoma-action.org.uk/lymphoma-action-statement-coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://lymphoma-action.org.uk/about-lymphoma-covid-19-and-lymphoma/guidance-shielding-people-who-have-lymphoma>

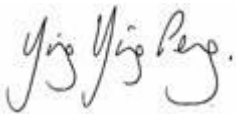
#### CLL

<https://www.clisupport.org.uk/latest-advice-on-covid-19/>

Yours sincerely,



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**Honorary Consultant & Reader in**  
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