Information for Radiation Oncology patients

The Alfred
55 Commercial Road,
Melbourne VIC 3004
T 03 9076 2000

Latrobe Regional Hospital (LRH)
10 Village Avenue,
Traralgon VIC 3844
T 03 5173 8000

We recommend that you seek information only from credible websites such as:
Alfred Health
www.alfredhealth.org.au

Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus

Australian Government
www.health.gov.au

Australian Smart Traveller
www.smartraveller.gov.au

Last updated:
3 August 2020

Information about Coronavirus (COVID-19) is updated regularly and our Radiation Oncology service is working with Alfred Health and Infectious Disease Experts to keep you updated.

Frequently Asked Questions

What precautions should I take for my personal protection?
The most important things you can do are to practice careful social distancing and good personal hygiene. Keep more than 1.5 meters away from people as much as possible. Good handwashing using soap and water is essential. Avoid touching your face and sneeze into your elbow.

Do I need to wear a mask?
At Alfred Health, we have measures in place to ensure everyone in our hospital is wearing masks to protect our community, patients and staff. If you are visiting Alfred Health as a patient or visitor regardless of where you live, you will be required to wear an Alfred Health/LRH issued mask upon entry to our hospital. This will be given to you after your temperature is taken at one of our screening temperature stations. Our staff will also be wearing masks.

Important facts about wearing masks:
• Always perform hand hygiene before putting on a mask.
• Wear your mask throughout your entire Alfred Health visit.
• Avoid touching the front of your mask when wearing it.
• Never wear your mask around your neck or hang it from one ear.
• Perform hand hygiene before removing a mask.
• Only remove your mask by the loops.
• Place into general waste bin at the exit points.
• Clean your hands after this.

Our staff can support you in putting on a mask, or if you have questions or concerns.

Should I have the flu vaccinations?
Yes. We recommend flu vaccination for everyone to protect you in the current winter flu season, however, this vaccination will not protect you against COVID-19.

Should I have a contingency plan?
Yes. Have a contingency plan in case of widespread disruptions or illness. Where possible, ensure you have adequate supply of your usual medications. Please discuss this with your usual pharmacist as they will have up to date information in regards to your medications.

Who should I contact if I have symptoms?
If you are unwell with fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat, breathlessness or loss of smell or taste, please do not attend your outpatient appointment. Instead, contact us to discuss your symptoms and treatment plan. After hours, contact The Alfred on 03 9076 2000, who will provide advice depending on the severity of your illness. If it is a medical emergency, go to your nearest emergency department.

Should I come to my radiation oncology clinic or treatment appointment?

Patients attending for daily treatment:
If you are well, treatment will proceed as scheduled, however you must contact us before coming in for your appointment if you are feeling unwell.

Patients attending for a consultation:
We may reschedule non-urgent appointments to a later date, or use telehealth (i.e. phone or video link consultation) to provide care. We will contact you if this occurs. Your individual care continues to be our priority, so please contact us if you have any questions.
Should I travel overseas?
No.

What do I do if I need a medical letter for work/travel etc.?
We will be able to assist with a generic letter, but please allow up to 1 week for your letter to be sent to you. If you require an individualised letter or document/s, we recommend that you book an appointment with your GP to discuss your request.

What measures are Radiation Oncology additionally taking, to minimise COVID-19 risk to patients and staff?
• You will have your temperature checked at the entrance and be asked some standard questions about recent travel, contact with known COVID-19 cases and if you have any respiratory symptoms similar to a cold or flu. Our staff also go through the temperature and symptom checking process prior to the start of each shift.
• We have separated chairs in waiting rooms. Where this has not been possible, you will see ‘Do not sit here’ signs on some chairs to maintain social distancing as much as possible.
• We have removed magazines, books, toys, jigsaws, tea and coffee and snacks from the waiting rooms.
• Only staff who are well will be providing your care. All staff are trained in hand hygiene and equipment cleaning for infection prevention.
• The Alfred is adhering to DHHS guidelines regarding the wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks and gloves. All staff caring for patients will be wearing masks, and additional PPE may be required where deemed appropriate for an individual’s clinical situation.

What do we also request of our patients?
• If you do find you are unwell, you must ring us before attending the hospital, and you will be advised what to do.
• If you are waiting on COVID screening results, ensure you do not attend for your appointment before ringing the department, even if you have received your negative result.
• Visitors are only allowed to accompany you if they are required to assist with communication, wayfinding, mobility or personal care and must be limited to one person. Carers will be asked to leave their contact details at Reception upon arrival.
• Physical distancing must be adhered to in waiting rooms. Your carer may be asked to go outside the department for a coffee or walk outside the department until close to your appointment, should the waiting area become full.
• For patients who get changed, bring your own bag to put your clothes in. Baskets will no longer be available to carry your clothes in. Please bring your own water bottle, however if you forget and need some water please ask Reception for a cup.

If you have any concerns, please speak to a member of staff. Thank you for your patience and understanding. We appreciate it’s a difficult time however we are doing everything we can to keep you safe and continue to provide our excellent service to you. We will be updating information as it comes to hand so will keep you posted with any updates.