

# Living with serious illness and Coronavirus worries

If you have a serious illness, you may be worried about getting coronavirus. People with cancer, people with serious illness and older people may get very sick if they also get coronavirus.

## What is coronavirus?

It is a new flu virus that is spread by coughing or sneezing, or by contact with contaminated hands, surfaces or objects.

## What are the symptoms?

People may get a fever, cough, runny nose or sore throat. In some cases, coronavirus can make breathing very difficult.

## How can I avoid catching coronavirus?

- Wash your hands with soap and water often or use hand sanitiser, especially when you get home
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth
- Try not to touch other people and stay 1.5 metres apart from others
- Clean surfaces in your home with disinfectant, including door handles

## Travel and visitors

- Avoid travel and public transport if you can
- Stay at home as much as possible
- Tell others not to visit you if they are even a little bit sick
- Ask visitors to wash their hands or use hand sanitiser when they come to your home
- Ask visitors to cough or sneeze into the inside of their elbow
- Do not share food or drinks

## Plan ahead

- Check that you have enough medicines at home. If you need more, ask someone to go and get it for you, so you don't have to go out.
- Ask family to drop off groceries off at your door
- Talk to your doctor about having your doctor appointments over the phone
- Make sure you know who to phone, in case you need medical help at night or on weekends. Talk to your doctor or local palliative care nurse about who you can phone.
- Make sure all your family members know what care you want and if you want to be cared for at home

## What should I do if I have flu symptoms?

- Talk to your doctor if you have a fever, cough, sore throat or trouble breathing
- Call the hospital before visiting the hospital and let them know that you have fever, cough, sore throat or trouble breathing. They will let you what you need to do. This is very important if you having treatment for cancer.
- If a family member gets a fever, cough, sore throat or has trouble breathing, they should ask to be tested for coronavirus. They can phone the coronavirus covid 19 MLHD Hotline on 1800 831 099 to talk about getting a test. Coronavirus tests are free.

## NSW Palliative Care After Hours Helpline

- If you have medical problems during the night or weekend, you can ring the NSW Palliative Care After Hours Helpline. It is a free phone service. They give advice to people who have a serious illness. A family member can phone the service for you.
- The Helpline is open on weekdays from 5pm to 9am, on weekends and public holidays on 1800 548 225.

## NSW Ambulance authorised palliative care plans

- People who have a serious illness can get a NSW Ambulance palliative care plan from their doctor
- Your doctor will give you a copy of the plan to keep at home
- If you get really sick at home, you can ring for an ambulance on 000
- When the ambulance arrives at your home show them your NSW Ambulance palliative care plan
- This plans tells them what medications you are on and allows them to give you other medicines while you are at home. The ambulance is free if you have a Health Care Card.