The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society has been speaking directly to patients and their caregivers since the start of the COVID pandemic. As the pandemic has evolved, so have their concerns. LLS developed this document to help blood cancer patients stay safe from COVID and balance out activities important to their quality of life. It’s important that patients make personalized risk decisions in consultation with their oncology treatment team.

1. Talk to your oncology treatment team about your immune status

A suppressed immune system increases the risk of serious outcomes from COVID-19 and can decrease vaccine effectiveness.

2. Maximize your protection by getting all COVID-19 vaccines as recommended

The LLS National Patient Registry and other studies have shown that COVID vaccines are safe and offer at least some protection to most blood cancer patients. Even if vaccines don’t always completely protect you from getting COVID, they can minimize the risk of the worst outcomes, including hospitalization and death.

3. When it comes to COVID-19 risk, decide what’s right for you

Some people isolate completely or attend only small gatherings, while others are comfortable taking more risk. Talk to your healthcare team about finding a balance between COVID risk and quality of life that’s right for you.

4. Make a plan in case you get sick and start treatment ASAP

1) Have COVID home tests that have not expired handy. You can check for details about specific test kits on the FDA web site here.

2) Call your healthcare team immediately if you have symptoms, have a known exposure or test positive.

3) Start treatment as soon as possible and talk to your healthcare team about what to do if your symptoms get worse.

4) Rest, drink plenty of fluids, take other medications like fever reducers if your doctor recommends them.

The mission of The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) is to cure leukemia, lymphoma, Hodgkin’s disease and myeloma, and improve the quality of life of patients and their families. Find out more at www.LLS.org.