

Information for people who receive home support and their family/whānau

23 March 2020

About COVID-19

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. There are simple steps you can take to protect you and your family and whānau.

The Ministry of health website has up to date information about COVID-19 which can be found at health.govt.nz/covid-19

How COVID-19 spreads

COVID-19, like the flu, can be spread from person to person. When a person who has COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or talks they may spread droplets containing the virus a short distance which quickly settle on surrounding surfaces.

You may get infected by the virus if you:

- inhale these droplets, which are usually less than 2 metre from the infected person
- touch those surfaces or objects and then touch your mouth, nose or eyes.

People who are more at-risk

Some people may be more at risk of COVID-19 infection:

- people who have conditions that compromise their immune systems, or who have compromised immune systems as a side effect of taking certain medications, such as chemotherapy
- people who have chronic medical conditions such as liver disease, heart disease, kidney disease, diabetes mellitus, lung disease or other long-term conditions
- people with a disability and co-existing long-term conditions
- people who have medical devices that enter the body (eg, a catheter, tracheostomy, ileostomy, feeding tube)
- people with surgical or large wounds
- people older than 70 years of age.

Protecting yourself and others

If you are over 70 years of age, have compromised immunity, or an underlying respiratory condition you should stay at home as much as possible.

Everyone should limit non-essential travel around New Zealand and practice physical distancing if on public transport.

If you work, start alternative ways of working if possible. For example, working from home, shift-based working, physical distancing within the workplace, staggering meal breaks, flexible leave arrangements.

You should practice good hygiene by:

- covering coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or your elbow
- putting used tissues in the bin or a bag immediately
- washing your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water and dry them thoroughly:
 - before commencing work in a new setting
 - before eating or handling food
 - after using the toilet
 - after coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose or wiping children's noses
 - after caring for sick people.
- cleaning your hands with a hand sanitiser that has at least 60 percent alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry, when soap and water are not available
- avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- avoiding physical contact when greeting people
- avoiding contact with people who are unwell
- cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs
- staying home if you feel unwell.

Be prepared

Make sure you have access to several weeks of medication supplies in case you need to stay at home for an extended period of time.

Stock up on basic household items and groceries to limit the number of trips to the supermarket or order your groceries online and have them delivered to your door. Below are links to Countdown and New World online shopping web sites:

- shop.countdown.co.nz/
- newworld.co.nz/shop/online-shopping

Develop a plan for what you will do if people you rely on for support become sick. Talk to people who need to be included in your plan: household members, neighbours, other relatives, whānau and friends, support service providers and support workers.

- If you are on Individualised Funding, or have a personal budget, you can contact your Host or your NASC coordinator for help with accessing short-term cover for support workers who are sick or self-isolating.
- Work out who can provide you with support if your usual support workers get sick.

Stay up to date with COVID-19 developments in New Zealand on the Ministry of Health website health.govt.nz/covid-19 or at covid19.govt.nz

Self-isolation

If you have been overseas or in close contact with someone confirmed with COVID-19 in the last 14 days, you should self-isolate for 14 days from the date of departure or close contact.

Please register your details with Healthline if you have not already (call **0800 358 5453**) or online at healthy.org.nz/register

If you need to self-isolate, you can still receive your essential supports with the appropriate infection control measures. Infection control measures are to protect you, your staff and other people.

- Advise your support worker and/or provider that you are self-isolating because you may have COVID-19. They will do an assessment to work out what infection control measures they need to take when visiting you.
- When your support workers visit you:

- maintain a distance of 2 metres if possible
 - advise other members of your home to stay in another room.
- If you have support workers who provide personal care and you can't stay more than 2 metres away from them, your support worker may wear one or more of these forms of protective equipment:
 - gloves
 - surgical face mask
 - disposable, fluid resistant gown
 - eye protection.
- If you have support workers who provide household management support, you should stay in your room away from your support person.
- When your household management support workers visit you, they should:
 - practice good hand hygiene and/or wear gloves
 - if they are cleaning rooms, they may also wish to wear protective equipment as an added precaution.
- If you employ your support people directly (for example, if you are on Individualised Funding or have a personal budget) you are responsible for providing your support workers with the protective equipment listed above. You can order these materials from your local district health board.

District Health Board contact list

DHB	Phone number
Northland – Whangarei	(09) 430 4100
Waitematā – North Shore	(09) 486 8900
Auckland	(09) 367 0000
Counties Manukau	(09) 262 9500
Waikato	(07) 839 8899
Bay of Plenty – Tauranga	(07) 579 8000
Tairāwhiti – Gisborne	(06) 869 0500
Hawke's Bay – Napier/Hastings	(06) 878 8109
Lakes DHB – Taupo/Rotorua	(07) 348 1199
Taranaki – New Plymouth	(06) 753 6139
Whanganui	(06) 348 1234
MidCentral – Palmerston North	(06) 350 8061
Wairarapa – Masterton	(06) 946 9800
Hutt Valley – Upper/Lower Hutt	(04) 566 6999
Capital & Coast – Kapiti Coast/Porirua/Wellington	(04) 385 5999
Nelson Marlborough – Nelson/Blenheim	(03) 546 1800
Canterbury – Christchurch/Kaikoura/Ashburton	(03) 364 0490
South Canterbury – Timaru	(03) 687 2100
West Coast – Greymouth/Hokitika/Westport	(03) 769 7400

Taking care of your wellbeing

Your emotional and mental health is important. It is normal to feel stressed or lonely when self-isolating, but there are some things you can do to feel better.

- Reach out to your usual support, like family, whānau and friends and talk about how you feel. We also recommend sticking to a routine such as having regular mealtimes, bedtimes and exercising.
- If you feel you are not coping, it is important to talk to a health professional. For support with grief, anxiety, distress or mental wellbeing, you can call or text 1737 – free, anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – to talk with a trained counsellor.

If you or your family members feel unwell

Contact Healthline for free on **0800 358 5453**, or your GP if you begin to feel sick. The symptoms of COVID-19 are cough, fever, shortness of breath, and sore throat.

More information

Call Healthline 24/7 on **0800 358 5453** if you need to speak to someone about COVID-19.

Visit **health.govt.nz/covid-19** or **covid19.govt.nz** for more information.

If you have concerns about your health, speak to your doctor.