



COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus)

Information for a suspect case

You have symptoms that may be COVID-19 and you are waiting for your test result and so you are considered to be a 'suspect case'.

It is very important that you are in self-isolation and follow the instructions on this information sheet to protect yourself and others.

What does self-isolation mean?

Self-isolation means staying at home. This helps prevent the spread of COVID-19 to others.

Do not go to work, even if you work in an essential industry. Do not go to the supermarket or pharmacy. Do not use public transport, ride-share or taxis, or visit others. You must not have any visitors come in to your house.

Do not go to hospital for any reason unless you need urgent hospital care. If you do need urgent medical care, please phone first and advise that you have been diagnosed with COVID-19.

If you become more unwell, call the free 24/7 Healthline number for advice: 0800 358 5453.

If it is urgent or if you have difficulty breathing, please call an ambulance on 111 and tell them that you may have COVID-19.

More advice about self-isolation is available on-line at covid19.govt.nz, or call the free 24/7 Healthline number above. Interpreters are available.

If my test is negative for COVID-19, when can I come out of self-isolation?

If your test shows you do not have COVID-19 and you have been symptom free for 48 hours, then this self-isolation requirement no longer applies. However, like everyone, you are required to follow the current national guidance relating to alert levels, staying home and avoiding all contact with others who are not in your household.

If my test is positive for COVID-19, when can I come out of self-isolation?

If your test is positive for COVID-19 you will then be considered to be a confirmed case and you will be contacted by a staff member from Toi Te Ora Public Health and given further advice. All confirmed and probable cases must stay at home (self-isolate) until advised by a health professional that you can come out of self-isolation AND the following criteria are met:

- It is more than 10 days since the start of your symptoms (or if you were hospitalised it is more than 10 days since your discharge from hospital) AND
- You have been free from all symptoms for at least 48 hours.

(Please note: If you have had a recent or current illness that weakens your immune system, such as chemotherapy or bone marrow transplantation, you may need to stay in self-isolation longer as advised by your health professional).

Repeat testing for COVID-19 is not recommended for most patients, particularly where the above criteria are met. Once you have come out of isolation it is important to maintain good hygiene and handwashing practices. Even when you have recovered from COVID-19, you will be required to follow the current national guidance relating to alert levels, staying home and avoiding all contact with others who are not in your household.

How can I protect others at home?

- If possible, have your own bedroom and use a separate bathroom/toilet.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues, or cough or sneeze into your elbow. Please place used tissues in the rubbish bin.
- Wash your hands often, for at least 20 seconds, with soap and water. Then dry them thoroughly. Use hand sanitiser if no soap or water is available.
- Avoid sharing household items such as dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, toothbrushes or bedding with other people in your home. After use, these items should be washed thoroughly with detergent and water. Please clean computer keyboards, desks and other surfaces regularly, especially before others use them.
- Maintain your distance (keep two metres or more away) from other people whenever possible.
- Stay in your home or accommodation, unless you are getting medical care. (You may go outside in your yard or garden, if you have one, but you must not leave the boundary of your property).

Please note, anyone living with you (in your 'bubble') is a close contact and must also immediately self-isolate for at least 14 days or as advised by Public Health. If they develop symptoms they should call the free 24/7 Healthline number for advice: 0800 358 5453.

If you have any questions about this information and advice, or have any difficulties with self-isolation or looking after yourself, please call Toi Te Ora Public Health on free phone 0800 221 555 and ask to speak to the on-call Health Protection Officer, or email enquiries@toiteora.govt.nz.

Thank you for helping prevent any spread of novel coronavirus in your community. Your ongoing support with this follow up is much appreciated.