

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Information for people under investigation for COVID-19

You are under investigation for infection with novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

- Your doctor will have tested you for the virus, and may be waiting on the results.
- Please follow your doctor's advice and [isolate yourself at home](#) until you are advised of your results and the doctor's recommendations.
- As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room, [away from others](#) in your home.
- Limit your movements, especially in shared spaces. Use a separate bathroom, if available. Limit the number of carers ideally to one person who is in good health.
- **If you become more unwell or have difficulty breathing, please call an ambulance on 111 and tell them you are under investigation for COVID-19.**

If your test result is POSITIVE (you have COVID-19)

- If the test confirms you do have the virus, you will be contacted promptly, monitored and given further advice by Auckland Regional Public Health Service or Ngā Tai Ora - Public Health Northland. **You cannot leave [isolation](#) until you are advised to do so by the health professional monitoring your health and wellbeing each day.**
- New Zealand is currently in [Alert Level 4](#). That means all New Zealanders, except those working in essential services, must stay at home and stop interactions with others outside their households.
- Even though Alert Level 4 means people can still go out to places like pharmacies and supermarkets for essential supplies, **you will not be able to do this until you have completed your isolation period AND been cleared to leave isolation by the health professional**

monitoring your daily health and wellbeing.

IF your test result is NEGATIVE (you DO NOT have COVID-19)

- You will be informed if your test result is negative. If it is, under Alert Level 4, you will be able to go out for essential supplies (e.g. from supermarkets and pharmacies) **UNLESS**:
 1. Others in your household are under investigation for COVID-19. If their test is positive, you will need to self-isolate for 14 days after they have completely recovered.
 2. You have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. You will need to stay in isolation for 14 days after your last contact with the case.
 3. You have returned from overseas in the past 14 days and need to complete your 14-day, post-travel self-isolation.
 4. Doctors consider you are a 'probable' case, even though your test result came back negative or inconclusive. This is because your symptoms and history indicate you are more likely to have COVID-19 than any other illness. Your doctor will give you specific advice about your ongoing isolation.

What does self-isolation mean?

This means staying at home [in isolation](#) in case you have COVID-19, so you don't spread it to other people. As much as possible, you should stay in a specific room, away from others in your home. As you are under investigation for COVID-19, you **CANNOT GO OUT AT ALL** until you have completed your isolation period **AND** been cleared to leave isolation by the health professional monitoring your daily health and wellbeing.

Do not go to hospital for appointments or procedures unless you need urgent hospital care. Call the hospital to reschedule these.

What about my family living with me?

If family members or friends develop symptoms, they should contact Healthline free on 0800 358 5453 or their doctor (but phone first and say that they have been in contact with someone who is under investigation for COVID-19). The symptoms are:

- **Fever, chills or sweats**
- **Cough**
- **Difficulty breathing**

Should I wear a facemask?

If you have a facemask, you should wear it when you are around other people (such as sharing a room or vehicle) and before you enter a healthcare facility. If you do not have a mask or wearing one makes breathing difficult, then people who live with you should not stay in the same room with you. If your carer has a facemask, they should wear it if they enter your room. If the mask gets damp or dirty with secretions, it must be changed immediately and should not be reused. Dispose of it carefully, avoiding touching the front of the mask.

Living with others

While you self-isolate, try to separate yourself from the people you live with. Minimise close contact with household members, avoiding face-to-face contact closer than 2 metres for longer than 15 minutes.

You should not share food and drinks. Someone in your home can prepare your food, but you should not prepare food for others.

Use your own toothbrush, eating and drinking utensils (including cups and glasses in the bedroom and bathroom), serving utensils, dishes, pillows, bed linen or other items.

Wash all these items thoroughly after use with detergent and water, and wash your clothing and dishes separate to others in your home.

If you have one, use a dishwasher to clean and dry your used crockery and cutlery. If this is not possible, wash them using washing up liquid and warm water and dry them thoroughly, remembering to use a separate tea towel.

Make sure you use separate towels from other people in your house, both for drying yourself after bathing or showering, and for hand-hygiene purposes. Remind the people you live with to use their own towels. These should be washed frequently using laundry detergent.

You should also use your own toilet paper, toothpaste and other personal supplies during your self-isolation period.

Use of shared spaces at home

Do not share a bed with others. You should avoid sleeping in a common area while self-isolating.

Minimise the time you spend in shared spaces such as bathrooms, kitchens and sitting rooms, and keep shared spaces well ventilated. [Clean all surfaces](#), like kitchen benches and sink-tops after you use them, and avoid touching them after you have cleaned them.

If you use a shared toilet and bathroom, make sure you clean the rooms every time after you use them (e.g. [wiping surfaces](#) you have been in contact with). You may wish to be the last to shower/bath in the morning or evening to make this easier on those you live with.

If you share a kitchen, avoid using it while others are present. Take your meals back to your room to eat. It may be easier for someone else in your household to prepare your food, so you can avoid the kitchen area as much as possible.

Ensure you clean computer keyboards, desks and all other [household surfaces](#) regularly, especially before others use them.

We understand that it will be difficult for some people to separate themselves from others at home, particularly those with young children and large families. You should do your very best to follow this guidance and everyone in your household should regularly wash their hands, avoid touching their face and clean frequently touched surfaces.

Practise good hygiene to protect others

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or cough/sneeze into the crook of your elbow. Throw used tissues into a lined rubbish bin, and immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, making sure you dry them thoroughly. You can also use a hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available.

Through the day, wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use a hand sanitiser. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

If you have a carer, they should use disposable tissues to wipe away any mucus or phlegm after you have sneezed or coughed. The carer should then wash their hands.

Doing laundry

Do not shake dirty laundry, so you do not disperse any possible virus through the air. Please use laundry detergent. If living with other people, ask someone else to fold and put away common laundry items (such as towels and tea towels) and provide a supply for you. You should fold and put away your own laundry items. Do not ask others to do your laundry.

If you do not have a washing machine, **wait until you are fully recovered (i.e. 48 hours after your symptoms end) AND your health professional has given you clearance to leave isolation before visiting the laundromat.**

Living with children

You should reduce your close contact with all children in your home, but we understand that may not be possible, especially with young children.

If a child develops symptoms, free phone Healthline on [0800 358 5453](tel:08003585453), or call their GP. They will also need to self-isolate until given clearance to leave isolation, and then remain at home under Alert Level 4.

Breastfeeding while self-isolating

There is currently no clinical evidence to suggest that COVID-19 can be transmitted through breast milk, if you are confirmed as having the illness. The virus can be spread to the baby in the same way as to anyone in close contact with an infected person. The benefits of breastfeeding outweigh any potential risks of transmission by being in close contact with your baby, but this will be an individual decision and can be discussed with your midwife or GP by telephone.

If you wish to breastfeed and are still waiting for your test results, limit the potential spread of COVID-19 to the baby by:

- washing your hands before touching the baby, breast pump or bottles
- avoiding coughing or sneezing on the baby while breastfeeding
- cleaning breast pumps, as recommended by the manufacturer, after each use
- considering asking someone who is well to feed expressed breast milk to the baby

If you are feeding with formula or expressed milk, sterilise the equipment carefully before each use. You should not share bottles or a breast pump with someone else.

Find more information at the [Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists website](#).

Living with an older or vulnerable person

If you live with an elderly or vulnerable person (person who is immune compromised or with comorbidities, e.g. cardiovascular disease, diabetes or hypertension), you should reduce your close contact with the person, but we understand that may be difficult. If the person develops symptoms, free phone Healthline on 0800 358 5453, or call their GP.

Getting food and medicine

Where possible, ask a friend or family member – or use supermarket or other delivery services – to drop off groceries, meals or medications. Ask others to carry out errands, like supermarket shopping, on your behalf.

Make sure any deliveries are left outside your home for you to collect. Many New Zealand companies are now offering a ‘contactless’ delivery option, where they notify you when they have delivered your order, but remain nearby to ensure you receive it.

Transport

As someone under investigation for COVID-19 you cannot use public transport, taxis or ride shares like Uber during your self-isolation period. Self-isolation is about staying home and limiting travel.

If you become more unwell and have difficulty breathing, phone an ambulance on 111 and tell them you are under investigation for COVID-19.

More information:

More [self-isolation information and advice](#) is available on-line at [covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz), or call the free 24/7 Healthline number: **0800 358 5453**. Interpreters are available.

If you have concerns, please call ARPHS on 09 623 4600, Ngā Tai Ora - Public Health Northland on 09 430 4100, or the free, 24/7 coronavirus line on 0800 358 5453. Interpreters are available.

For more information, visit [covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz) or the [Auckland Regional Public Health Service website](#).