



Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Information for close contacts of a confirmed case



You have been identified as having had close contact with someone with COVID-19.

As you have been near a person with the virus, there is a possibility you may also become unwell.

What you need to do:

1. You must **self-isolate** (stay at home) for 14 days from the date you last had contact with the infected person.
2. If the infected person is someone you live with, you must self-isolate from this person within your own home:
 - a. Avoid the person who is sick and stay at least 2 metres away from them.
 - b. Thoroughly clean shared and high-touch surfaces such as door handles, and kitchen benches.
 - c. Wash your hands thoroughly and often to protect yourself.
3. Ask someone else to pick up essential supplies (e.g. food and medicine) on your behalf to make sure you have everything you need. They must leave these at the door and not come inside. You cannot go out for essential supplies until you have completed your 14-day self-isolation period, and only then if you have remained well.
4. If you do develop COVID-19 while in self-isolation, you will have to continue self-isolating at home until 48 hours *after* you have stopped having symptoms AND at least ten days since your symptoms started.

What to do if you become unwell

In most cases the virus causes mild to moderate symptoms. However, some people do develop pneumonia and severe respiratory illness.

If you become unwell, call your local doctor or free phone Healthline: **0800 358 5453**



Healthline operates 24/7 and interpreters are available. Tell them you are a close contact of someone with COVID-19. The symptoms are:

- Fever, chills or sweats
- New or worsening cough
- Difficulty breathing, shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Loss of smell
- Signs of a head cold (runny nose, sneezing, post-nasal drip)

If you become severely unwell or have difficulty breathing, immediately call an ambulance on 111 and tell them you are a close contact of someone confirmed as having COVID-19.

What does self-isolation mean?

Self-isolation helps to prevent you spreading COVID-19 to other people.

You should also minimise close contact with others living in your home by avoiding face-to-face contact closer than two metres for longer than 15 minutes.

If you want to speak to someone outside your household, use the phone or other means of contact. Arrange for friends, family or delivery drivers to drop off food and supplies outside your door. Do not go to hospital to visit people, for outpatient appointments, or for surgery unless you need urgent hospital care. Call the hospital if you need to reschedule any appointments.

You may leave your home for fresh air and to exercise (e.g. walk, bike), but you must do this close to home, by yourself, and keep at least two metres away from any other person.

Living with others

Try to separate yourself from the people you live with. 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 (stored separately), 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 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 your bent 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. 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.

Wearing face masks

Only wear a mask if you are ill with COVID-19 symptoms (especially coughing) or looking after someone who may have COVID-19. If you are not sick or not looking after someone who is ill, the most effective way to protect yourself and others is to practise good cough, sneeze and hand hygiene.

Living with children

If the child has **not** been identified as a close contact of the person diagnosed with COVID-19, they need only adhere to the requirements of New Zealand's current national [Alert Level](#). So far we have seen that children with COVID-19 appear to be less severely affected. However, 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 48 hours after they have become symptom-free.

Breastfeeding while self-isolating

There is currently no clinical evidence to suggest that COVID-19 can be transmitted through breast milk. 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, 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 (e.g. someone who has a weakened immune system or a pre-existing health condition such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes or hypertension), and if the person has **not** been identified as a close contact of the person diagnosed with COVID-19, they can continue their normal activities (while adhering to New Zealand's current [Alert Level](#)). 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.

Doing laundry

To limit the possibility of dispersing the virus through the air, do not shake dirty laundry. 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 72 hours after your 14-day self-isolation period – and only if you are well and haven't developed COVID-19 - before taking your laundry to a laundrette.

Transport

As a close contact of someone diagnosed with COVID-19 you cannot use public transport, taxis or similar transport methods during your self-isolation period. Self-isolation is about staying home and limiting travel. Even after your self-isolation period ends, you must adhere to the travel requirements of New Zealand's current national [Alert Level](#).

Using temporary accommodation for self-isolation

Visit the COVID-19 website – www.covid19.govt.nz for [more information](#) on this.

Taking care of your mental health and 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. Visit www.covid19.govt.nz for information and advice, or call or text 1737 to speak with a trained counsellor. The service is free and operates 24/7.

Accessing financial support

Visit www.covid19.govt.nz for information on the support available. For all non-health-related COVID-19 questions, you can also call Government Helpline (0800 779 997) between 8am and 1am, seven days.

MORE INFORMATION:

Visit: health.govt.nz/covid19

Call:

- **Healthline: 0800 358 5453** for health-related matters. This line operates 24/7 and has interpreters available.
- **111 in an emergency;** for example, if you're having difficulty breathing. Tell the phone operator you're a close contact of someone confirmed as having COVID-19.