

What we know

COVID-19 is a global pandemic affecting the lives of millions. Each nation is managing the spread of COVID-19 differently.

COVID-19 (Coronavirus 2019) is a new virus that can damage your lungs and airways. It can make us a lot sicker than an ordinary flu and in severe cases, it causes death.

The disease spreads easily from person to person and those infected can be contagious for up to 14 days. There is currently no known vaccine and people don't have immunity to it.

What we are doing

The goal of our elimination strategy is to keep it out, find it and stamp it out.

This doesn't mean we won't get any COVID-19 cases. It means that we have a plan in place to rapidly respond to any cases found in the community.

We will need to continue this work long term.

The main parts of this strategy are:

- protection from infection
- detection of the virus and stopping its spread
- isolation of any known or potential cases.

Until a vaccine is widely available, everyone in Aotearoa has an important role to play in keeping COVID-19 out of our communities.



PROTECT

The first and best line of defence against COVID-19 is protecting ourselves and our whānau from becoming infected.

Protecting you and your whānau

One of the best and easiest ways of protecting you and your whānau is to practice good hygiene and physical distancing.

COVID-19 is passed on through droplets from sneezing, coughing, talking and runny noses. This can stay on some surfaces for up to three days.

Some of the simple hygiene measures everyone can follow include:



Wash and dry hands



Sneeze or cough into your elbow



Clean surfaces



Don't share kai or drinks



Wear masks or face coverings on public transport or where you can't physically distance



Stay at home if you are sick

The Alert Level system

The Alert Level system is an important way to prevent and restrict the spread of COVID-19 in Aotearoa.

Each alert levels lays out what rules you and your whānau need to follow to keep your community safe from COVID-19.

For example, you may have to stay at home, practice physical distancing or limit the number of people you meet with.

Alert levels may move up and down, may be different in different areas, and are only for a set period of time.

Decisions about changing alert levels are carefully considered by the Government based on advice from the Ministry of Health and other officials.

You can find out about the current alert levels online at www.covid19.govt.nz



DETECT

Being able to detect and test all possible cases of COVID-19 in the community is critical in containing its spread.

a) Testing

The only sure way to know if you or someone else has COVID-19 is to take a test.

If you have symptoms of COVID-19 you should phone your family doctor, iwi health provider or Healthline (0800 358 5453) to see if you should be tested.

The common symptoms are:

- a new or worsening cough
- fever
- shortness of breath
- sore throat
- sneezing and runny nose
- temporary loss of smell

COVID-19 tests are free.

It can take 2-10 days for you to get sick after being infected. From the time you are infected, you are contagious for up to 14 days.

Testing allows health officials to identify new cases quickly and take appropriate action.

b) Keep track of where you've been

Fast and effective contact tracing helps stop any further spread of COVID-19.

If you test positive for a COVID-19 test, a health official will interview you to determine who else may have been exposed to COVID-19 and who also needs to be tested.

If you use the NZ COVID Tracer app, it is a lot easier for health officials to trace your contacts and contain the potential spread of the virus quickly.

Other ways of keeping track of your movements include keeping a handwritten diary or taking photos on your smart phone which are automatically time-stamped.

Encourage your family, whānau and friends to record their movements.



ISOLATE

Separating out known or potential cases of COVID-19 protects others.

a) Managed Isolation

Border controls are important to stop the introduction of new COVID-19 cases from overseas.

All people entering New Zealand must isolate in a government-controlled facility for at least 14 days, ensuring no new COVID-19 infections are introduced into the community.

If new arrivals test positive for COVID-19 they will be moved to a quarantine facility.

b) Quarantine

If you test positive for COVID-19, you will be required to isolate at a quarantine facility to help contain the spread of the virus.

Quarantine facilities are set up to provide the best possible care. Whānau (close household contacts) can decide to go to the same

quarantine facility as well or they must self-isolate at home.

When health officials are confident you are no longer infectious, you will be released. For most patients this will be at least 10 days.

c) Self-isolation

You should self-isolate if you:

- are unwell
- are showing signs of having COVID-19
- have had a test and been advised to self-isolate
- are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19

In some cases, people such as kaumātua and those with health conditions, have chosen to self-isolate as an extra precaution.

Puritia kia ū, kia mataara!