Te Whatu Ora
Health New Zealand

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

Prepare and stay safe

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Prepare and stay safe

COVID-19 is in the community. To slow the spread and continue to protect yourself, your whānau, and your community, it is important to keep up the healthy habits we know.

Stay up to date with your vaccinations

Having COVID-19 does not provide the same level of immunity as getting vaccinated. We also know that your protection from the primary course of the vaccine decreases over time.

To keep your immunity levels high, stay up to date with your vaccinations – including boosters. This will lower your chances of getting very sick from COVID-19 and ending up in hospital.

Vaccination remains one of the best tools in the fight against COVID-19. Even if you have had COVID-19, getting a booster once enough time has passed gives you another layer of protection from the virus.

Being up-to-date with your COVID-19 vaccinations also helps protect people who are more at risk of becoming seriously ill from the virus and people who cannot be vaccinated such as babies and children under 5 years old.

You should wait 6 months after testing positive before getting a COVID-19 vaccination.

COVID-19 vaccines (https://info.health.nz/conditions-treatments/infectious-diseases/covid-19/covid-19-vaccines)

Stay home if you are sick

Staying home if you are sick can stop the spread of COVID-19. If you have cold, flu or COVID-19 symptoms you should get a rapid antigen test (RAT) as soon as you start to feel unwell.

Doing a RAT and reporting the result in My Health Record (https://my.health.nz/) means you can be connected with any help and support you might need.

It is also important to test before visiting people who are at higher risk and to not visit them if you have any symptoms, or if you have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 5 days.

Call your doctor or Healthline on 0800 611 116 for advice about getting tested.

Limit time in crowded places

Risk of infection spreading between people still remains in certain locations such as:

- public transport – buses, trains, indoors on ferries and flights;

- closed indoor spaces with poor ventilation

- crowded places

- close-contact settings, for example, if there are face-to-face conversations, shouting or singing.

Wear a face mask

Face masks can help reduce the spread of COVID-19. They are a way we can protect ourselves and others. We recommend you wear a face mask when visiting healthcare services.

They are also encouraged to be worn when in closed, crowded and confined spaces, with poor ventilation.

A well-fitting face mask can help stop particles from spreading or being breathed in when someone speaks, laughs, coughs or sneezes. Non-valved respirator-type masks such as P2/N95, KN95 or FFP2 masks also help prevent you from breathing in the virus.

Face masks (https://info.health.nz/conditions-treatments/infectious-diseases/covid-19/face-masks)

Improve ventilation

Good ventilation helps remove COVID-19 virus particles in the air. We encourage you to let in fresh air every day, including after someone visits your home, shop or office.

If you can, partly open a window about 5cm for most of the day. Or open windows for at least 15 minutes as often as possible, whenever it is practical to do so.

If your windows do not open, check if your ventilation system filters (cleans) the air.

Ventilation (https://info.health.nz/keeping-healthy/environmental-health/ventilation)

Cough or sneeze into your elbow

Cough or sneeze into your elbow or cover your mouth and nose with tissues. Put tissues in a bin immediately, then wash or sanitise your hands.

Keep your hands clean

Washing or sanitising your hands is one of the easiest ways to keep yourself and others safe. Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Then dry your hands completely.

Using an alcohol-based hand sanitiser is also effective at killing germs and viruses. If using hand sanitiser, make

sure you use enough product to cover your hands, rub it in and allow it to dry.

You should wash or sanitise your hands if you have been in a public place, and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.

Avoid touching your face, including your eyes, nose or mouth, if your hands are not clean. Either way you clean your hands, it will kill the COVID-19 virus by bursting its protective bubble.

Keeping your hands clean also prevents other types of germs and viruses. This is especially important if you are visiting vulnerable people.

Health Habits (https://info.health.nz/keeping-healthy/healthy-habits/)

Clean surfaces

Clean surfaces regularly. This includes frequently touched items like door handles, light switches and phones.

When an infected person breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes, they may spread particles containing the virus. These particles range in size. The larger and heavier particles or droplets can settle on surrounding surfaces.

Use regular household cleaning products and follow instructions. Remember to store cleaners and disinfectants safely.

[Health Habits](https://info.health.nz/keeping-healthy/healthy-habits/) (https://info.health.nz/keeping-healthy/healthy-habits/)

If you need support

- The COVID-19 disability helpline can provide help or information about vaccines, testing, managing COVID-19, and any other health concerns you may have. Call 0800 11 12 13 for free. If you are unable to call, you can text 8988.

- You can also call Healthline for free for advice on 0800 611 116.

End of Prepare and stay safe.