

# Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

## Information for people with COVID-19

**You have been diagnosed with novel coronavirus (COVID-19) by your doctor or are considered a ‘probable case’\*.**

### What you need to do:

1. Please follow your doctor’s advice and [self-isolate](#) yourself at home from today. You must stay in self-isolation until 48 hours *after* your symptoms have stopped *and* at least ten days since your symptoms started. This is to avoid spreading the virus to anyone else.
2. During your self-isolation period, as much as possible, you should stay in a specific room and away from other people in your home. Limit your movements, especially in shared spaces. Use a separate bathroom, if available. Limit your carers ideally to one person who is in good health. Practising good [cough, sneeze](#) and [hand hygiene](#) is vital.
3. Ask someone else to pick up essential supplies (such as food and medicine) on your behalf to make sure you have everything you need. The person delivering your supplies **cannot** be one of your household contacts (i.e. living with you in your bubble) as they should also be in self-isolation. The person delivering supplies must leave them at the door and not come inside.
4. You cannot go out for essential supplies or to exercise until you have completed your 14-day self-isolation period, you have been completely well for 48 hours AND it has been at least ten days since your symptoms started.
5. If you have returned from overseas, you will be required to go into ‘managed isolation’ in a government-provided facility (hotel) or, if you have COVID-19 symptoms, go into a quarantine facility (separate hotel). You will need to self-isolate there for at least 14 days; you can’t self-isolate at home.

**If you become more unwell or have difficulty breathing, please call an ambulance on 111 and tell them you have been diagnosed with COVID-19.**

***\*Even if you have returned a negative test result, your symptoms and clinical history mean your doctor believes you are more likely to have COVID-19 than any other illness. This makes you a ‘probable case’.***

## 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.

## What about my family living with me?

Members of your household will have been exposed to the virus as they have been in close contact with you while you have been infectious. Public Health will be in contact with them to provide advice. If family members, friends or other close contacts develop symptoms, they should contact the free, 24/7 Healthline on 0800 358 5453 or their doctor (but phone first and say that they have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19). The symptoms are:

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

## 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

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.

### **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.

So far we have seen that children with COVID-19 appear to be less severely affected, however, it is important to do your best to follow this guidance.

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 (person who has a weakened immune system or a pre-existing health condition e.g. cardiovascular disease, diabetes or

hypertension), you should minimise your close contact with the person. 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. 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 and your health professional has given you clearance to leave isolation** before taking your laundry to a laundromat.

### **Transport**

As 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](http://www.covid19.govt.nz) for [more information](#) on this.

### **Accessing financial support**

Visit [www.covid19.govt.nz](http://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.

### **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](http://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.

## 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 or Ngā Tai Ora - Public Health Northland on 09 430 4100.**