

What happens if you test positive for COVID-19?

December 2021

Most fully-vaccinated people with COVID-19 are likely to have a mild to moderate illness and will fully recover in their own home, or in suitable alternative accommodation.

‘Care in the community’ is where people are supported by local care providers to ensure their health, welfare and wellbeing needs are met while they are recovering from COVID-19.

Why isolation?

Everyone who tests positive for COVID-19 and everyone who lives with them will need to isolate to help stop the spread of the virus.

There are two ways to self-isolate – at home or in suitable alternative accommodation, or in a managed isolation facility. Managed isolation facilities are in hotels in different locations across New Zealand where you can isolate for free, with your household for at least 10 days.

If there is another property that you have access to, or are provided, that is more suitable for self-isolation than your usual place of residence, you can self-isolate there instead.

Note: if you are seriously unwell you will receive hospital care.



Isolating at home

When you test positive for COVID-19 you will need to isolate in your home or in suitable accommodation for at least 10 days while you recover from COVID-19.

Everyone else in your home must isolate for at least 10 days while the COVID-19 positive person is recovering, and will be advised if further isolation is required beyond that.

While isolating

Do not:

- leave the place where you are isolating;
- go to work, school or public places;
- go on public transport or use taxis;
- go out to get kai and medicine;
- have visitors in your home except for health or community workers who are providing essential care to you or someone in your household;
- go to a vaccination appointment. If you have a vaccination appointment scheduled either ring the booking line or go online to change your appointment;
- go out in a public place to exercise – only exercise at home.

Where possible, ask whānau or friends to shop for you, but do not bring them into the house.

If this is not possible, order supplies online. Make sure any deliveries are left outside your home for you to collect.

Health support while isolating

It is normal to feel anxious or stressed about isolating with COVID-19.

You will be provided a health contact person, who will contact you often to make sure that you and your whānau are safe and supported, and given a telephone number for 24 hour health support.

Key points of contacts for health support may differ across the country. Your point of contact may be an individual or a team that could include your general practice, primary care provider or a local community care provider.

Extra support

Many people will be able to manage with help from friends and whānau, but there is information and help available if you need it.

When you're told you need to isolate, you'll be asked if you need any support or help. Most people will be able to look after themselves. However, some people may need things like food and groceries.

Ministry of Social Development (MSD) is coordinating support, and connecting people with the right service to help them.

If you need help, MSD will connect you with someone. They may be from a local community organisation a government agency or marae-based services or support that iwi have established.

They will call you to talk about how they can help - so you and your whānau get the support you need to isolate.

If you are isolating and need support, you can call the COVID Welfare Phone Line on 0800 512 337. It's open seven days a week.

If you can't work from home

It's important you stay home until your test results come back. If you can't work while you are isolating, your employer may be able to apply for the Short-term Absence Payment to help them pay you.

If you test positive or need to isolate because you are a close contact, your employer may be able to apply for the Leave Support Scheme. It's to help them keep paying you if you can't work while isolating.

If you're self-employed and can't work while isolating, you can also apply for these payments.

More information can be found at
www.workandincome.govt.nz/employer-covid-support

Or phone 0800 559 009

Tips for keeping your whānau safe

To help reduce the spread of COVID-19, you should:

- Stay away from others in your home as much as possible. If you can avoid sharing rooms or beds or preparing food for others this will help reduce the chances of spread of COVID-19.
- As much as possible, open windows and doors to allow air to flow through your house.
- Wipe down surfaces used by others like bathroom taps and kitchen benches with soap, water and a cloth.
- Do not share dishes and cutlery, towels and pillows. Please do your own laundry if possible.
- Wash your hands often and cough or sneeze into an elbow or a tissue.

Medicines

If you need medication, contact your GP or your local community pharmacy who will make arrangements for your medication to be safely delivered to your home.

Important things to remember

Please make sure you answer your phone, even if it's a private number.

For health support, call your health contact. Call 111 if you need urgent help.

Go to [Covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz) for more information. It's data free - you don't need data on your phone or device.

Health, welfare and wellbeing checks

Day 1

Someone will be in touch to let you know you have tested positive, and to provide support and information. Your immediate health, welfare and wellbeing needs will be discussed. This could be your GP, a social and wellbeing provider, a kaupapa Māori or Pacific provider, or the public health unit.

Within 48 hours

If you can safely stay in your home, you will receive a care pack containing advice on self-care and how to get better. It may include a pulse oximeter if you need one.

Days 3–10

If you are at low risk of experiencing severe COVID infection and have only mild symptoms, you will receive a virtual health check (probably a phone call) every second day.

If you have moderate symptoms or are considered more at risk, you will receive a daily virtual health check from your health provider.

If you need urgent medical help or can't breathe properly, call 111 immediately. Tell them you have COVID-19 when you ring.

Everyone in your home will need to be tested regularly to check whether they have COVID-19 infection. You will be advised when, how and where this needs to be done.

Days 10-14

You will have a health assessment by a medical practitioner at 10 to 14 days (the timing depends on if you are vaccinated).

You will need to be free of COVID-19 symptoms for the 72 hours prior to your release date and continue to have no symptoms. If approved, you will be able to leave your house the next day.

You do not need to be tested. If you did, the result would likely show as positive but that doesn't mean you are infectious.

Beyond 10-14 days

Anyone you live with will need to stay home for the entire time you (and anyone else in your household who tests positive) are isolating. Once the last case has been released from isolation, the remaining members of the household will have a further period of 10 days in isolation. This means they will need to isolate for longer than you.

End of What happens if you test positive for COVID-19?