COVID-19: AUCKLAND FAQs

Why is Auckland in Alert Level 3?

Auckland is in Alert Level 3 until midnight Friday 15 August after a person in our community contracted COVID-19. Members of the person's family have also tested positive.

Our health authorities are working quickly to find where and how the person contracted the virus and undertake contact tracing.

Moving to Alert Level 3 reduces the risk of COVID-19 spreading in our communities undetected. Until we can find the source of the infection, there is a heightened risk of community transmission.

We understand this can cause anxiety and worry. Please do not panic and remember if you have any cold or flu-like symptoms, you should get tested immediately.

How will I know if I have been in contact with the case or one of their household members?

Our health authorities are working quickly to trace everyone who has been in close and casual contact with the positive case. If this is you, they will contact you and advise you on next steps.

How do I know if I should get tested?

If you are in Auckland and have any cold or flu-like symptoms, you should get a COVID-19 test. You can get a free test at:

- at your doctor – please phone ahead to make an appointment
- at a community testing clinic

If you are unsure if you should get a test, call your doctor or Healthline on 0800 358 5453.

What should I know before getting a test?

- Wear a mask and gloves
- Take a form of photo ID for every person you are with who is getting tested
- Bring your NHI number with you (if you know it)
- Please be patient

What health services are still running?

- Go to your hospital appointments unless the service contacts you to reschedule. Our hospitals are very safe to attend
- Pharmacies remain open

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- Family doctors remain open
- Urgent care clinics will remain open

What can I do to keep myself and my whānau safe?

There are a number of simple but effective ways you can keep your family safe. These include:

- Stay home
- If you have symptoms: fever, runny nose, a cough, loss of taste or smell, please get a COVID-19 test
- Wear a mask when you are out in public (more information of masks can be found below)
- Keep track of where you have been
- Wash your hands regularly
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow

You can find more information on keeping safe on the ARPHS and COVID-19 websites.

Should I wear a mask?

If you live in Auckland, you should wear a mask when you are out in public. They can help reduce the spread of COVID-19 when there are cases of community transmission.

A mask works by helping stop droplets spreading when someone speaks, laughs, coughs or sneezes. This includes someone who has COVID-19 but feels well or has no obvious symptoms.

Make sure you have enough masks for everyone who usually lives in your household.

What are the different kinds of masks? Which one is right for me?

There are two types of masks available – non-medical masks and medical masks.

Most people can use non-medical-grade masks. These masks prevent the wearer from spreading diseases to others and could help protect the wearer from becoming infected.

Non-medical-grade masks can be either single-use or reusable.

- A single-use mask can only be worn once, and you should throw it away after wearing it.
- Reusable masks can be washed and reused.

You can buy non-medical-grade masks online or in shops like pharmacies, supermarkets and hardware stores.

You can make your own masks. Find out how at cdc.gov

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At Alert Level 2 and higher, people at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 should use medical-grade masks to help prevent infection.

How do I wear a face mask safely?

When you wear a face mask, it's important you use it safely.

Never share face masks with other people. Face masks should not be worn by:

- young children or people who could not remove them without assistance
- people who have trouble breathing.

For more information on how to put on a face mask safely, what to remember while wearing a mask and how to take it off safely, please visit the COVID-19 website.

Can I still go to my doctor or attend an appointment at hospital?

Yes. Staying healthy is important so you should continue to seek healthcare during Alert Level 3. During Alert Level 3, healthcare services, such as Healthline, GPs, cancer services, disability and aged support services remain open.

Some planned care, including elective surgery and radiology, will be provided. Some non-urgent services or treatment may be deferred.

If you have received a medical appointment you should attend.

If you are concerned about any aspect of your health, call your GP.

As always, if you require urgent medical advice, call 111.

Can I visit my friend or whanau in hospital?

Our city's hospitals understand the importance of visiting hours. We have updated our visitor policies to protect our most vulnerable patients in Alert Level 3.

Please check your local DHB website to find out more:

- Waitemata DHB
- Auckland DHB
- Counties Manukau DHB

What if English is not my first language and I need health advice?

If you need health advice and support in your preferred language, you can ask for it when you call Healthline. Press 1 on your phone and you will be connected with an interpreter who speaks your language.

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You can also find a number of translated resources on the [COVID-19](#) website.

Where can I find mental health support?

It's normal to feel anxious and stressed during times of uncertainty. The [COVID-19](#) website has plenty of advice on looking after your mental wellbeing.

If you need support with anxiety, distress or mental wellbeing, you can call or text [1737](#) to talk with a trained counsellor for free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You can talk to counsellors in languages other than English.

You can also contact the Asian Family Services. They are a nationwide mental health and addiction service that provides free and confidential support in English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese, Thai and Hindi. Phone 0800 862 342 from 9am to 8pm, Monday to Friday. For further information, visit [here](#)

How will health authorities find where the person contracted the virus?

Health authorities are using genome testing as part of their work in finding the source of the infection. By using genome testing, scientists can compare different strains of COVID-19 and find out