

COVID-19 Message Grid

24 February 2022

This contains the most up-to-date and approved messaging on key COVID-19 matters.

Information that changes or is added between grids will be highlighted. Please ensure you are using the most up to date version.

This version was current at 24/02/2022 3:54 pm.

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Unite Against COVID-19

Topic	Key Message	Supporting Messages	Notes
Next stage in plan to manage Omicron peak	New phase of response begins 11:59pm tonight (24 February)	<p>These changes will ease some of the pressure on our testing and contact tracing services over the next 3-6 weeks, while helping to ensure critical services and supply chains remain operational and our economy keeps moving.</p> <p>Because so many people are vaccinated and Omicron is less severe New Zealand can have a more devolved response and much greater self-management.</p> <p>Care and support will continue to be there for those who need it most, as it always has been.</p>	Min. Hipkins briefing and PR, 24 Feb

Omicron response – isolation	Only confirmed cases and their household contacts are required to isolate	<p>All other contacts are now asked to monitor symptoms but do not have to isolate.</p> <p>Confirmed cases and household contacts should isolate for 10 days but can now self-release after day 10, providing any testing requirements are met.</p> <p>The critical worker exemption scheme announced this month will enable eligible household contacts to return to work during their isolation periods by returning a daily negative RAT.</p>	Min. Hipkins briefing and PR, 24 Feb
Omicron response – testing	RATs will become the primary form of testing	<p>Millions of RATs have been distributed around the country to testing sites, GPs, pharmacies and within workplaces.</p> <p>People can now access a RAT from hundreds of locations around the country. Locations with RATs available can be found on the HealthPoint website.</p> <p>PCR testing will be reserved for people where it's clinically indicated they need it. A PCR test will no longer be required to verify a positive RAT result.</p> <p>Approved RATs will soon be able to be sold to the public through retail outlets. This will provide choice and access for the general public and small businesses.</p>	Min. Hipkins briefing and PR, 24 Feb
Omicron response – contact tracing	New Zealand is moving to greater self-management for contact notification	<p>This will include a new self-investigation tool to support people with COVID-19 to self-notify contacts. Because only household contacts are required to isolate, the tool will assist tracking of high-risk exposure events or locations.</p> <p>Contact tracing teams will now focus on identifying and tracing those who have visited high-risk locations, such as hospitals or aged care facilities.</p> <p>There will be continued support for those members of our community who are not digitally set up.</p>	Min Hipkins briefing and PR, 24 Feb
Health update	Cases, testing and contact tracing	<p>Hospitalisations</p> <p>There are currently 205 people in hospitals across New Zealand.</p> <p>2 cases are in high dependency or intensive care units.</p>	MoH site, 24 Feb

		<p>The Ministry of Health reports the death of a patient with COVID-19 at Middlemore Hospital.</p> <p>Cases</p> <p>There are 6,137 new cases in the community (3,526 identified through PCR, 2,611 via RAT), and 8 new cases identified at the border.</p> <p>Testing</p> <p>33,225 PCR tests processed nationwide in the last 24 hours.</p> <p>Number of RAT stock available in New Zealand: 6,300,000.</p>	
Māori and Pacific community support	Extra support available to Māori and Pacific communities to face the impact of Omicron	<p>Using the \$140 million funding, 160 Māori and Pacific health providers will together support Māori and Pacific households throughout Aotearoa. This in addition to the Care in the Community boost the Government announced last week.</p> <p>The focus of this response is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enable Māori health providers to scale up their efforts, support the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agencies to directly get resources to the people most in need, and for the Māori Communities COVID-19 Fund to support community agencies in complementary ways. 	Mins. Davis, Henare, Jackson and Sio PR, 22 Feb

Vaccinations

Topic	Key message	Supporting messages	Notes
Booster programme update	Yesterday, 24,632 booster doses were administered in New Zealand	<p>The total number of people who have received boosters – including those vaccinated overseas – is 2,249,809 (68.2% of those eligible).</p> <p>Increasing numbers of cases and hospitalisations are another reminder that vaccination is our best defence against the virus.</p>	MoH site, 24 Feb

		<p>There is growing evidence that three doses of Pfizer is protective against infection and symptomatic infection for Omicron.</p> <p>Ministry of Health strongly encourages people to get a booster dose if it has been more than three months since their second dose.</p>	
Vaccination progress	95% of eligible people in New Zealand have had two vaccine doses	<p>Vaccines administered in New Zealand yesterday: 536 first doses; 1,146 second doses; 136 third primary doses.</p> <p>Vaccines administered in New Zealand to date: 4,017,924 first doses; 3,955,733 second doses; 32,938 third primary doses.</p> <p>People vaccinated (total, from all ethnicities, including those vaccinated overseas, age 12+): 4,060,799 first dose (96.5%); 3,997,213 second dose (95%).</p>	MoH site, 24 Feb
Paediatric vaccines	1,385 paediatric first doses and 150 paediatric second doses were administered yesterday	<p>To date, 232,359 paediatric first doses and 2,239 paediatric second doses have been administered in New Zealand.</p> <p>Detailed information on COVID-19 vaccines for children can be found at the MoH and UAC websites:</p> <p>COVID-19 vaccine and children: Information for parents and caregivers Ministry of Health NZ</p> <p>How children and young people can get vaccinated Unite against COVID-19 (covid19.govt.nz)</p>	MoH site, 24 Feb; UAC and MoH sites

International travel

Topic	Key message	Supporting messages	Notes
Reconnecting New Zealand to the World	From Monday 28 February, New Zealanders and other eligible	Two weeks later, New Zealanders and other eligible travellers in other parts of the world will be able to	PM's stand-up, 22 Feb

travellers from Australia can enter the country and self-isolate

travel to New Zealand without staying in managed isolation.

Travellers will receive a Welcome to Aotearoa pack at the conclusion of their arrival. After they have collected their bags, travellers will be issued rapid antigen tests, and instructions on how and when to use them. The pack also includes information and advice on self-isolation.

The Government expects this system, and expectations of travellers, will change. When announced, self-isolation was 10 days. It has already reduced to 7. This is expected to continue to evolve and reduce.