

Frequently Asked Questions

- Community Testing Centres will determine which test is best for people. A Rapid Antigen Test (RATs) may be used to check if someone is positive for COVID-19.
- RATs will continue to be used for critical workers that are Household Close Contacts to determine if they are able to return to work. See further information about the Close Contact Exemption Scheme under Rapid Antigen Testing (below).

Q. What if I have symptoms but can't get to a testing station?

- RATs are available in many locations around the country including testing centres, pharmacies and your local GP.
- If you find yourself unable to access a test you should call Healthline or your local health provider (e.g. your doctor or health provider) for advice – they may be able to help you get access to a test.
- Depending on your circumstances, support may be available to you to help you isolate – see to <https://covid19.govt.nz/isolation-and-care/getting-extra-support-if-you-have-covid-19-or-are-self-isolating/> for more information.

Cases and Contact Tracing

- Cases will now be identified by positive PCR or RATs. Household contacts should test as soon as they develop symptoms.
- As case numbers grow, low-risk people who test positive for COVID-19 will be asked to complete an online form instead of doing an on phone or in person interview.
- The self-investigation tool will notify self-identified contacts. Only the highest risk contacts will be traced by contact tracing teams, with the focus moving to identifying and tracing those who have visited a high-risk location such as hospital or aged care facility.
- Only the highest risk contacts will be traced.
- People without access to a mobile phone or a website will be contacted by their Care Coordination Hub, or a primary care, Māori, iwi or pacific health provider.

More information:

[Contact tracing | Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#)

[Isolation and care | Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#)

[COVID-19: Information for Close Contacts | Ministry of Health NZ](#)

Q. If I receive a positive result, what do I need to do?

You should go home and isolate straight away. During this next phase, Cases are required to isolate for 10 days from the date they were tested. After 10 days, you may leave your home or your place of self-isolation.

Cases will be sent a COVID-19 Contact Tracing form to complete online. If they are unable to do this a contact tracer will call and carry out a case investigation interview.

Q. What is the COVID-19 Contact Tracing form?

As case numbers grow, low-risk people who test positive for COVID-19 will be asked to complete an online form instead of doing an on phone or in person interview.

People who test positive will be sent a text message with an access code and link to the form. Any information shared is private and secure. People will be asked to share the same information

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as in an interview – symptoms, details of household close contacts, high risk locations and close contacts, and NZ COVID Tracer diary and Bluetooth data.

Completing the form online has benefits for people. It's quicker than an interview and only takes about 30 minutes to complete. Once people receive the message, they can start this anytime within 24 hours and can continue to add and share information with us for 3 days. If the form isn't started within 24 hours, someone will call to check in. There is also a dedicated email address (help@tracingform.min.health.nz) and phone number (0800 555 728) if people need help.

People without access to a mobile phone or a website will be contacted by their Care Coordination Hub, or a primary care, Māori, iwi or Pacific health provider.

Q. What does this mean for household members of a Case?

If someone in your household has COVID-19, you are considered a Household contact. You are required to isolate for the same 10 days as the case and get a test on day 3 and day 10 of the case's isolation period. If you develop symptoms you should test sooner. If you return a positive test you must isolate as a case.

Household contacts can end their self-isolation on the same day as the (first) person with COVID-19 in the household, provided you have no new or worsening symptoms AND your day 10 test was negative.

Q. I am a household contact of a case and a critical worker. Do I need to isolate for 10 days?

Under the Close Contact Exemption Scheme people working for critical businesses are able to return to work when they would otherwise have to be isolating as a household contact, provided they are asymptomatic, vaccinated, and return a negative Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) each day before they go to work. Critical workers are also required to follow other public health rules to help keep everybody safe.

Self-isolation

- Under the current settings, people who test positive for COVID-19 need to self-isolate for 10 days. People who test positive will be provided with information on how to self-manage.
- If someone in your household has COVID-19, you are considered a Household Close contact. You are required to isolate for the same 10 days as the case, and get a test when the person with COVID-19 gets their day 3 and day 10 tests.
- Being ready for getting COVID-19 is about making sure you and your household have a plan and know what to do. You will need to be ready to look after yourself at home. It will mean your whānau and community can help each other if needed.

More information:

[Isolation and care | Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#)

[Be prepared for COVID-19 | Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#)

[How to self-isolate | Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#)

[Leave and pay entitlements during COVID-19 » Employment New Zealand](#)

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Q. What happens if I can't safely isolate at home?

In most cases, people with COVID-19 and their whānau will be able to isolate within their home. If you cannot self-isolate safely within your own home, your local Public Health Unit will make the decision to move you to alternative accommodation.

Q. What happens if I am required to isolate when I have been travelling, and am somewhere other than my home?

Under the COVID-19 Protection Framework you may travel within New Zealand. Ahead of your travel, you should make a contingency plan of what you will do if you test positive for COVID-19 or become close contact while you are away. You can travel back home if this will be your place of self-isolation.

If you do become a case, you might not be able to return home for a minimum of 10 days. It's important that you build potential isolation time into your travel plans, as the growing number of COVID-19 cases will mean you are more likely to be exposed to COVID-19 while you're away.

Q. How should I prepare for self-isolation?

Being ready for getting COVID-19 is about making sure you and your household have a plan and know what to do. You will need to be ready to look after yourself at home. It will mean your whānau and community can help each other if needed.

See [Be prepared for COVID-19 | Unite against COVID-19 \(covid19.govt.nz\)](#) for how you can get prepared to self-isolate, and key things to consider when you make a plan. Your plan should allow for the fact that you could be required to isolate for up to 10 days as a household or close contact, or longer if you are a close contact who then tests positive case for COVID-19.

Q. Is there a legal requirement to isolate?

Yes, as per the COVID-19 Public Health Response legislation.

Q. What support is available to me to help me self-isolate?

Welfare support such as help with accessing food, may be available to you if you are required to self-isolate. If you are sick or caring for a dependent who is sick, you can use your existing sick leave entitlements. An overview of leave entitlements and guidance for employers and employees can be found here: [Leave and pay entitlements during COVID-19 » Employment New Zealand](#) There are also other financial supports available to help you, your business and employees through the response to COVID-19. These include:

- [Short-Term Absence Payment](#)
- [Leave Support Scheme](#)
- [COVID Support Payment](#)

Q. If I am not in paid employment and have to isolate due to COVID-19, what support is available?

- Support is available to those who are a household contact or confirmed cases of COVID-19. It is targeted to those most in need. Factors that will be normally be considered include:
 - requirement to self-isolate
 - family and household details
 - help from whānau, family and friends
 - existing relationship with iwi, Pacific or other community organisations