

## For people at risk of severe illness from COVID-19 due to age, and / or existing and underlying health conditions

If you are aged 70 and over, and/or have certain existing medical conditions (which you may not even be aware of) you are at additional risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

[Find more information about the medical conditions on the Ministry of Health website](#)

You will need to weigh up this risk against being able to live your life as normally as possible under Alert Level 2.

At Level 2 the goal is reduce the risk of transmission – the disease is contained, but the risk of community transmission remains. You need to be careful when you are outside your homes, but can live a more normal life with some extra precautions.

The bubble system no longer exists at Alert Level 2, and we can socialise again with our close friends and family. You should still keep the number of people you interact with small, whenever possible. You need to be careful when you interact with people outside your immediate social circle – particularly in public spaces.

At Alert Level 2, you can leave home to do more things, but you should follow public health measures and consider others around you. You should follow the physical distancing rules including keeping 2 metres distance. Take extra care if you interact with people you don't know as it won't be easy to do contact tracing if necessary

You should work with your GP or specialist if you need further help understanding your own level of risk during Alert Level 2 and how best to stay healthy.

## Shopping

If you feel safe to do so, you can visit shops, cafes, restaurants and other businesses – as the risk is reduced at Alert Level 2. If you prefer, you can continue using things like internet shopping and deliveries. As at all Alert Levels, when you do go out, you need to practice distancing and good hygiene (avoid touching surfaces, hand washing, cough etiquette, wiping frequently touched surfaces).

## Work

Most workplaces can reopen at Alert Level 2, providing they have public health measures in place. If you cannot work from home, you should agree with your employer what measures will be put in place to manage your health and safety. If you and your employer agree that you should not come to work during this period, and you cannot work from home, then you and your employer should discuss and agree what leave from work and pay arrangements apply. This could be a mixture of paid leave types (e.g., annual leave, special paid leave) or unpaid leave.

## Socialising

Level 2 means we can socialise safely and reconnect with family / whānau and close friends. There are restrictions on gatherings, which will be regularly reviewed and you need to keep track of where you've been and who you've seen. Any social gathering needs to keep a record of attendees and maintain physical distancing. Anyone who is unwell with cold or flu symptoms should stay at home.

To find out about the current number restrictions for people attending gatherings, check the [covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz) website. This number will be regularly reviewed based on current public health evidence and case numbers in New Zealand.



## **Travel**

You can now travel regionally, with measures in place to keep it safe such as appropriate physical distancing and tracking where you have been.

## **Recreation**

At Level 2, we can resume our regular recreation activities. We know exercise is important, and some of the restrictions on these activities have been lifted. We advise at-risk people take additional precautions when participating in exercise – including cleaning gym equipment before and after use and being cautious when participating in contact sports.

## **At all Alert Levels**

Remember – regularly disinfect surfaces; wash and dry your hands, cough into your elbow, don't touch your face; stay home if you're sick, and get tested for COVID-19 if you have flu like symptoms.

## Personal movement

### Can I go shopping or visit cafés and restaurants?

Everyone, including people at risk of severe illness from COVID-19 (including older people) can visit shops and restaurants as long as they practice physical distancing rules and good hygiene practices.

If you are unwell, you should still stay at home.

At Level 2 Food delivery services and takeaways will be still be available. You can also ask friends or family to help deliver food to you.

If you choose to leave home for groceries or other services, take additional precautions when leaving home.

That includes:

- > Keep 2 metres away from others you don't know well
- > Avoid touching surfaces and wash your hands before and after you leave home
- > Wiping keys, hand rails and regularly touched surfaces, and avoid passing around your mobile phone to other people
- > Consider delivery or click and collect options to limit your contact with other people
- > Make sure you keep track of where and when you visit.

### What can I do outside the house?

At Alert Level 2 there is no restriction on when you can leave your house.

Under Level 2, you can travel to go to work if your workplace has put in the appropriate public health measures and you feel safe doing so.

You can attend permitted gatherings of up to 10 people for events indoors or outdoors. This includes weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, funerals and tangihanga. All gatherings must record attendees to ensure contact tracing can be conducted if necessary. Physical distancing must also be observed. Attendees should be seated if possible, and aim to last for less than 2 hours if it is a gathering held outside a home or place of residence.

### Can I interact with other people?

**Yes**, the bubble system no longer applies at Level 2, but you need to do so safely – maintain physical distancing from those you don't know, observe the restrictions on gatherings and keep a record of who you've seen and where you've been. Stick to socialising with people you know well in groups of no more than 10.

### What do I do if I feel unsafe in my household?

It is okay to ask for help if you or someone else is in danger. If you think someone could be harmed or may harm themselves, call the Police on **111**, even if you're not sure.

You can also call, email or text the Elder Abuse Helpline – a 24-hour service answered by registered nurses who can connect to local elder abuse specialist providers.

You can call **0800 32 668 65 (0800 EA NOT OK)**, text **5032** or email [support@elderabuse.nz](mailto:support@elderabuse.nz)

### Where can I get personal health information about what is safe for me to do?

If you are unsure about what activities outside the home might be safe for you given your individual health circumstances, you can call your GP or Healthline on **0800 611 116** for advice.



## Workers

### Can I go back to work?

Most workplaces can reopen at Alert Level 2, providing they have public health measures in place. If you cannot work from home, you should agree with your employer what measures will be put in place to manage your health and safety. If you and your employer agree that you should not come to work during this period, and you cannot work from home, then you and your employer should discuss and agree what leave from work and pay arrangements apply. This could be a mixture of paid leave types (eg annual leave, special paid leave) or unpaid leave.

Workplaces must operate safely for everyone – eliminating the risk of spreading COVID-19 wherever possible. If it's not possible to eliminate the risk, then minimise it as much as possible by thinking about all the types of actions you could take. Your employer could consider making changes, isolating workers, limiting interaction between groups of workers, recording who is working together, disinfecting surfaces, and maintaining high hygiene standards, as well as physical distancing between workers and with any customers allowed on premises. Some essential services are permitted that include close personal contact between workers and others – e.g., in aged care or hospitals.

In these types of roles, and those which are allowed that involve customers (such as supermarkets and buses), you should discuss with your employer if additional measures are warranted to keep you healthy and safe.

The Government has established a leave scheme to provide financial assistance to workers who are not able to work. Your employer can apply for this. See: <https://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/other-types-of-leave/coronavirus-workplace/>.

**If you are unwell, you need to stay home.**

### I am 70 (or over 70) and employed. Do I have to go back to work if I am concerned about contracting COVID-19?

You need to discuss this with your employer and you should agree with them whether you will return to work, whether you can work from home, and what leave and pay arrangements will apply.

For more information about working, you can go to:

<https://www.employment.govt.nz/leave-and-holidays/other-types-of-leave/coronavirus-workplace/>

<https://worksafe.govt.nz/>

### If I go back to work, what extra safety precautions should I take? Will testing be available to me?

Extra precautions could include working a different roster where there are fewer workers on and the ability for greater distancing, undertaking different duties that require less interaction with others, or using additional barriers or protective equipment.

Testing is available, as for everyone – you can find more information about this here:

<https://covid19.govt.nz/covid-19/about-covid-19/covid-19-testing/>

If you are concerned that you have COVID-19 symptoms, ring Healthline or your GP.

### Can I continue to volunteer outside of the home?

You are able to volunteer as long as you operate in a manner that is safe for your client and complies with Alert Level 2 requirements. The following website provides useful resource on remote volunteering from home

<https://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz/available-resources/virtual-volunteering/>



## Health

### Can I access my GP or other health practitioner in person?

You can still visit your doctor, nurse or other health professional in person but where possible you will still be offered virtual, non-contact consultations. Make sure to call them first to see if you can have your appointment over the phone.

### Can I get a Flu Shot?

**Yes.** Flu shots are available free for people over 65 or with pre-existing conditions at doctor's surgeries and some local pharmacies.

You should:

- > Phone ahead to make an appointment
- > Find out about any infection control measures to follow during your visit
- > Stay two metres away from anyone other than the healthcare professional giving the vaccination
- > Maintain good hygiene practices at all time.

### Do I need a mask/gloves when I go out/to work – will this be supplied?

In most cases personal protective equipment (PPE) will only be necessary in the same workplaces as it was before COVID-19, like hospitals or businesses that have close contact with customers, like hairdressers.

Most workers will not need PPE.

Otherwise basic hygiene measures are the most important way to stop the spread of COVID-19.

That includes:

- > hand hygiene – that is, washing hands regularly with soap and water, or cleansing with hand sanitiser if not possible to wash your hands
- > staying at home if you are sick
- > coughing or sneezing into a tissue or your elbow and then performing hand hygiene
- > cleaning surfaces regularly.

Specific guidance on PPE is being developed for the sectors that need it.

### Can my in-home care services resume?

**Yes,** personal care services, such as toileting, washing and feeding, and home help, such as house cleaning, is available. People providing these services must follow Alert Level 2 precautions, such as good hand hygiene and physical distancing.

### Can I access other health services like my dentist or optometrist?

**Yes you can.** Contact them over the phone to discuss what treatment you need and if you need to go in for a face-to-face consultation. Extra measures will be put in place to keep you safe.

Pharmacies remain open. Pharmacies will use telehealth for medicine management where possible.

Other services such as physiotherapists, podiatrists and optometrists will operate as normal with public health precautions. Virtual or over the phone appointments are encouraged where possible.



## **I have been struggling with feeling isolated during lockdown. Who can I talk to for help?**

If you would like to talk to someone about your mental wellbeing, you can call or text 1737 any time, 24 hours a day. You'll get to talk to (or text with) a trained counsellor. The service is completely free.

## **Can I get my haircut or nails done?**

**Yes you can.** Make an appointment before you go. Extra measures will be in place to keep you safe.

## **Gatherings**

### **If I practice physical distancing can I now meet up with my book club/bridge club/walking group?**

**Yes**, but with precautions in place and meeting the requirements of permitted gatherings up to 10 people.

Remember, you can use video calls through tools like FaceTime or Zoom to keep in contact with your social groups.

### **Can I go to a funeral?**

Up to 10 people can gather for a funeral. Those who do attend must keep themselves and others safe by staying at least 1 metre apart and washing hands regularly.

Refer to advice on gathering for more information.

### **Can I drive my car?**

**Yes.**

### **Can I attend carer support groups in my local area?**

**Yes**, but follow the guidance and restrictions on gatherings.

### **Can I go to someone's house for dinner?**

**Yes you can.** You should keep the number of attendees to 10 people or less, and don't go if you or anyone else is sick with cold or flu like symptoms.

### **Can I visit a family member or friend who is dying or in aged residential care, a hospice, hospital, or in disability residential care?**

For guidance on visiting family or friends in these circumstances, you can find more information here:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-current-situation/health-and-disability-services-alert-level-3/alert-level-3-questions-and-answers>



## Can I use cash or cheques to pay for things? Can I visit the Post Office to pay my bills?

You can still use cash and cheques to pay for things but where possible, use contactless payments (like payWave, PayPass).

You can also safely do most of your banking over the phone without paying any fees, depending on the type of account you have. You will need to contact your bank to set this up.

**ANZ** 0800 269 296

**ASB** 0800 803 804 (General enquiries), 0800 272 119 (priority line for over 70s)

**BNZ** 0800 275 269

**Heartland Bank Limited** 0800 85 20 20

**HSBC** 0800 80 23 80

**Kiwibank** 0800 113 355

**Southland Building Society** 0800 727 2265

**The Co-operative Bank Limited** 0800 554 554

**TSB Bank Limited** 0800 872 226

**Westpac New Zealand Limited** 0800 400 600

Most New Zealand Post outlets will reopen at Level 2. Opening hours under Alert Levels may vary from standard opening hours. For the most up to date information on opening hours please check the NZ Post website:

<https://www.nzpost.co.nz/tools/postshop-kiwibank-locator>

New Zealand Post Box Lobbies will remain open but with reduced operating hours.

## I don't have an internet connection; how will I get information around COVID-19?

Listen to your radio (Radio NZ) and watch your television. You can listen/watch the regular updates on both the main TV broadcast channels.

## I previously had my meals delivered; will this service start again?

**Yes**, so long as delivery can be contactless (for instance if the meals are dropped off on your doorstep).

## How can I learn to do things online?

SeniorNet, Age Concern and Digital Inclusion Alliance Aotearoa run workshops to help older people feel confident online.

You can find out more:

**SeniorNet** - [www.seniornet.co.nz](http://www.seniornet.co.nz)

**Age Concern** - [www.ageconcern.org.nz](http://www.ageconcern.org.nz)

**Digital Inclusion Alliance Aotearoa** - <https://digitalinclusionalliance.nz/>