

COVID-19 Testing: Information for People Who Do Not Have COVID-19 Symptoms

Testing selected groups of people who do not have COVID-19 symptoms helps us understand if there is any COVID-19 that we don't know about in our communities.

There are three main groups of people living in our communities who are being offered testing when they do not have COVID-19 symptoms:

- People who work at New Zealand's international border (e.g. crew, airport or maritime workers),
- Government or hotel staff in Managed Isolation and Quarantine Facilities,
- People who are requested to have a COVID-19 test by a Medical Officer of Health as part of investigating a COVID-19 case or cluster of cases.

Sometimes other groups of people may be offered COVID-19 testing when they don't have any COVID-19 symptoms, on direction from a Medical Officer of Health or the Ministry of Health.

If you have any symptoms of COVID-19 (cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, runny nose, loss of sense of smell, fever) or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19, please tell the person who is arranging your test, so they can manage your testing process and give you appropriate advice.

It is important you read or have explained to you the information below about COVID-19 testing. This information is for people who don't have symptoms that could be COVID-19 and are not currently staying in a Managed Isolation or Quarantine Facility.

What happens if I agree to be tested for COVID-19 today?

- You will be asked to fill out a form or answer questions including your contact details, your living circumstances, and, if you are employed, about your role in your workplace.
- You will have a swab taken from the back of your nose or throat; this can be a bit uncomfortable.
- Results are usually back within 1-3 days.
- **You can go about your life as usual in the current Alert Level while you wait for your result (you don't need to self-isolate), unless otherwise instructed by the Medical Officer of Health.**

What happens next if my result is positive?

- If you have a confirmed **positive** result someone from Auckland Regional Public Health Service will call you to let you know. You will need to stay in **isolation for at least 10 days** from the date of your test. Public health will release you from isolation when there is confidence you are no longer infectious.
- Public Health will discuss with you the **isolation arrangements** for you and your household contacts (usually your family). You will be required to isolate in a managed facility unless suitable other arrangements are approved by the Medical Officer of Health. The Public Health Service will talk with you more about what this means and you will be supported to access any extra help you need.
- Public Health will ask you about all **the people you have had contact with** recently and those people may be asked to stay at home (in self-isolation) in case they become unwell too. Their self-isolation will be for 14 days from the last day you spent time with them.
- All close contacts will be required to be tested and to self-isolate. Only household close contacts will be requested to go to a managed facility.

What happens next if my result is negative?

If your test result comes back **negative** you should be notified about it via **text message or** a phone call. The message will direct you to Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) (<https://bit.ly/ARPHSNegRes>) for further instructions. Some people who return a negative result may need to be in self-isolation, for a variety of reasons. *You must stay in self-isolation if you have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19, until you have completed 14 days of self-isolation.* This is 14 days from your last contact with the person confirmed as having COVID-19. ARPHS' website explains this and any other situations where staying in isolation is necessary.

Having a negative test means that COVID-19 was not detected at the time you were tested. It does not mean you can't get COVID-19 in the future. If you become unwell with the symptoms that could be COVID-19, you may be advised to get tested again depending on your symptoms and your circumstances.

What happens to the information collected about me?

Your information will be shared with those who are monitoring and managing COVID-19 in our community. This may include your GP, healthcare organisations such as Public Health, the Ministry of Health, your employer and your whānau. This is to enable important activities such as contact tracing to occur. We will only use and disclose your personal information if that is permitted by law. You have a right to access and correct information held about you.

What do I do if I start to feel unwell while waiting for my results?

If you develop any symptoms of COVID-19 while you are waiting for your results, including any of the following – cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, runny nose, loss of sense of smell, fever – you must **stay home, or at the place you are currently staying, in self-isolation. If you are employed, let your manager know.**

If you feel worse, you should phone your GP or ring the COVID-19 Healthline on 0800 358 5453. Healthline is a free 24/7 service with interpreters available. It is important to **let them know you have been tested for COVID-19 already.**

If you develop difficulty breathing, are severely unwell or it is an emergency, you should call an ambulance on 111.

How can I protect myself and others from COVID-19?

- Thoroughly wash and dry your hands often through the day. Use soap and water.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues, or cough or sneeze into your bent elbow. Place used tissues in the rubbish bin, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water, then dry them well.
- Clean surfaces regularly, especially before others use them.
- Maintain your distance from others whenever possible and wear a mask (or other face covering such as a bandana or scarf if you don't have a mask) when you are out in public.

Where can I go for more advice?

For COVID-19 health advice and information, call the COVID-19 phone line 0800 358 5453. For other health advice call Healthline on 0800 611 116. Healthline operates 24/7 and interpreters are available. Note, Healthline will NOT be able to access your results. You can get more information from [Auckland Regional Public Health Service: www.arphs.health.nz](http://www.arphs.health.nz).