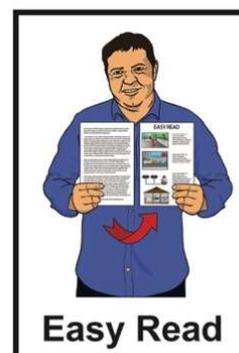


# Te Whatu Ora

## Health New Zealand



# COVID-19: Prepare and stay safe



**Updated: January 2024**

**Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government

# Before you start



This is a long document.

It can be hard for some people to read a document this long.



Some things you can do to make it easier are:



- read it a few pages at a time
- set aside some quiet time to look at it
- have someone read it with you to support you to understand it.



# What you will find in this document

Page number:



About this document .....4



Vaccinations.....6



If you are unwell..... 10



Wearing a facemask ..... 19



Ventilation .....22

**Page number:**



Coughs and sneezes .....23



Keep your hands clean .....25

Clean things people touch .....28



Where to get support .....30

Where to find more information.....32

# About this document



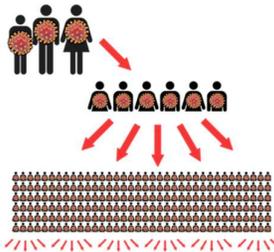
This document is about how to stay safe from **COVID-19**.



**COVID-19** is a virus that can make people very ill.



It is also called **Coronavirus**.



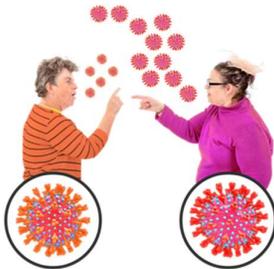
COVID-19 spreads between people very easily.

There is COVID-19 in the community.



This document tells you some things you can do to take care of:

- yourself
- your whānau / family
- your community.



Some of these things make it harder to catch / spread COVID-19.



Some of these things mean there is less chance of getting very ill if you catch COVID-19.

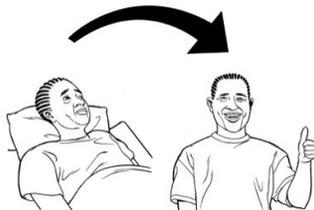
# Vaccinations



A **vaccine** is a medicine that can keep you safe from getting sick from a disease.



It works by helping your body make **antibodies** against the disease.



**Antibodies** help your body fight off illnesses.

The part of your body that makes antibodies is called your **immune system**.



**Immunity** means how well your immune system can fight off a disease / illness.



You can get immunity from COVID-19 by:

- getting a COVID-19 vaccine
- catching COVID-19.



Getting a vaccine is a safer way to get immunity than catching COVID-19.



It is important to get all your COVID-19 vaccines.



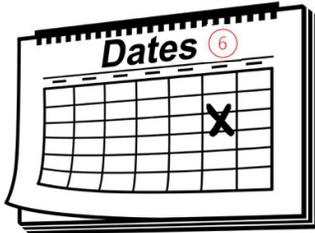
The immunity you get from a COVID-19 vaccine wears off over time.



You might be able to get a COVID-19 booster vaccine.



Getting a COVID-19 booster will give you more immunity again.



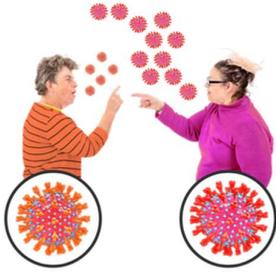
If you catch COVID-19 you may have to wait 6 months before you can get a COVID-19 vaccine.



Getting your COVID-19 vaccines means that if you catch COVID-19 you have less chance of:

- being very unwell
- needing to go to hospital.





Getting a COVID-19 vaccine also means you have less chance of giving COVID-19 to other people including:

- people who might get very unwell with COVID-19
- people who cannot get a COVID-19 vaccine.



# If you are unwell



If you are unwell you should stay at home until you feel well again.



Staying home when you are unwell means there is less chance of giving COVID-19 to other people.



You should do a COVID-19 test if you have **symptoms** of:

- COVID-19
- a cold
- the flu.



**Symptoms** means signs that you may have an illness.



COVID-19 symptoms include things like:

- a cough
- sneezing and a runny nose
- finding it hard to breathe
- high temperature of at least 38°C on a thermometer – this is when you would feel very hot
- a sore throat
- not being able to smell things for a little while
- headache.





Other symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- diarrhoea / runny poo
- nausea / vomiting
- muscle pain or body aches
- malaise — a general feeling of being unwell.



All these symptoms:

- do not always mean you have COVID-19
- can be symptoms of other illnesses like a cold or flu.

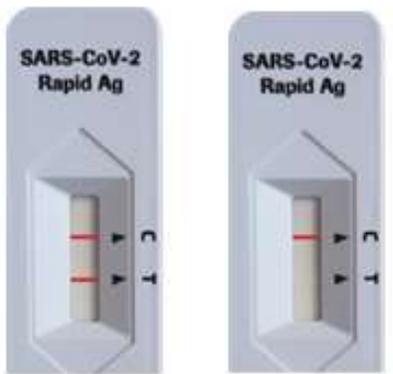


Most COVID-19 tests are **RATs**.



A **RAT** is a COVID-19 test you can do at home.

RATs are also called **rapid antigen tests**.



Positive

Negative

If the test is **positive** that means you have COVID-19.

If the test is **negative** that means you may not have COVID-19.



After you do a RAT you should report the result.



You can report your RAT result on the **My COVID Record** website at:

**<https://mycovidrecord.health.nz>**



**My Covid Record** is not in Easy Read.



You can also report a RAT result over the phone on:

**0800 222 487**



If your RAT is positive you should **isolate** for 5 days.



**Isolate** means you:

- stay at home
- keep away from other people.



Isolating stops COVID-19 spreading to other people.



If your RAT is negative you should still stay at home until you feel well again.



You should do a RAT before you visit people who might get very unwell with COVID-19 like:



- older people
- people who have medical conditions that make it hard for them to fight off diseases.



You can get more information about what to do if you are unwell from your doctor.



You can also call Healthline on:

**0800 358 5453**

## Crowded places



COVID-19 spreads very easily when there are a lot of people in one place like:

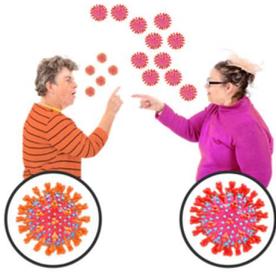
- buses
- trains
- shops.



You have more chance of catching COVID-19 in indoor places where there is not a lot of **ventilation**.



**Ventilation** means fresh air that moves around indoors.



COVID-19 spreads when people do things like:

- talk
- shout
- sing.



You can lower your chance of catching COVID-19 by:

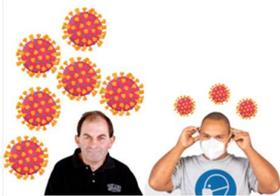
- staying away from crowded places when you can
- wearing a face mask in crowded places.



## Wearing a face mask



Wearing a face mask means you have less chance of catching COVID-19.



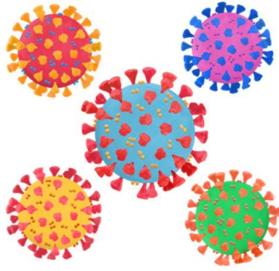
Face masks can also stop you from giving COVID-19 to other people.



Face masks can stop **particles** from going into the air when you:

- talk
- laugh
- cough
- sneeze.





**Particle** means a very small piece of something like:

- water
- dust.

Particles are often so small we cannot see them with our eyes.

Particles with COVID-19 on them can float in the air for a long time.

**Respirator masks** can stop you from breathing in COVID-19 particles.



**Respirator masks** are a kind of face mask that you throw out after you have used them.

Respirator masks fit closer to your face than other types of mask.

Respirator masks are also called:

- N95
- KN94
- FFP2.

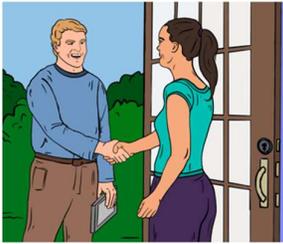
Face masks should fit your face well without any gaps.

You should choose a face mask that does not have a vent to let air out.

# Ventilation



Good ventilation means COVID-19 particles will not stay in the air for as long.

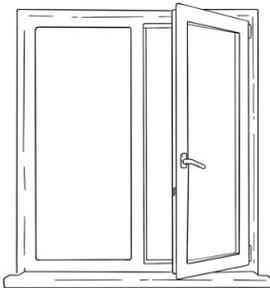


It is a good idea to let fresh air in when you have visitors to your:

- home
- work.



You can let fresh air in by having a window open a little bit all day.



You can also open your windows right up for 15 minutes a few times a day.

## Coughs and sneezes



Coughing / sneezing can spray a lot of COVID-19 particles into the air.



When you cough / sneeze you can stop COVID-19 from spreading by covering your:

- nose
- mouth.



Cover coughs / sneezes with:

- your elbow
- a tissue.



You need to put used tissues into the rubbish straight away.



Remember to wash your hands after you cough / sneeze.

# Keep your hands clean



Washing your hands can stop diseases like COVID-19 from spreading.



You should wash your hands after:

- being somewhere where there are a lot of people
- coughing
- sneezing
- blowing your nose
- using the toilet.



Do not touch your face if your hands are not clean.



You need to wash your hands for 20 seconds using:

- soap
- water.



After you wash your hands you should dry them well.

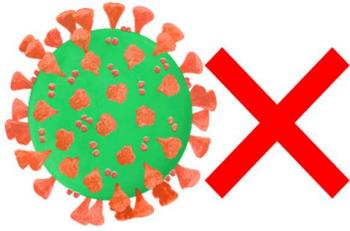


You can also clean your hands with a hand sanitiser that has alcohol in it.

Make sure you use enough hand sanitiser to cover both your hands.



Rub the sanitiser all over your hands until they are dry.



Cleaning your hands will kill the COVID-19 germs.



It will also kill other germs that can make you unwell.



Having clean hands is very important if you visit someone who could get very unwell from COVID-19.

## Clean things people touch



COVID-19 particles can go into the air when someone:

- breathes
- talks
- coughs
- sneezes.



Some particles can fall down onto surfaces like:



- tables
- benches / counters.



It is important to clean the surfaces in your home often.



It is also important to clean the things people touch often like:

- door handles
- light switches
- phones.



You can use regular cleaning products.

Follow the instructions on the bottle / container.



Remember to store cleaning products safely.

# Where to get support



You can phone the **COVID-19 disability helpline** to get information about:



- COVID-19 tests

- masks



- COVID-19 vaccines

- how to look after yourself when you have COVID-19



- any other worries you have about COVID-19.



The phone number for the COVID-19 disability helpline is:

**0800 11 12 13**



You can also text the COVID-19 disability helpline on:

**8988**



You can also call Healthline on:

**0800 358 5453**



It does not cost money to call these numbers.

## Where to find more information



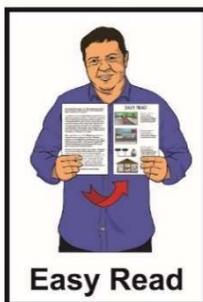
The government **website** about COVID-19 is:

<https://covid19.govt.nz>



You can use this website to find out more information about:

- looking after yourself if you have COVID-19
- where to get support if you need it.



More information about COVID-19 is available in Easy Read on the COVID-19 **website** at:



<https://covid19.govt.nz/easy-read/>



This information has been written by Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand.



It has been translated into Easy Read by the Make it Easy Kia Māmā Mai service of People First New Zealand Ngā Tāngata Tuatahi.



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