

## Government Guidance during COVID-19

### Vulnerable Staff

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These guidelines are subject to change and will be updated as further evidence becomes available.

#### 1. Who is at higher risk for COVID-19?

In line with government guidance, this list describes who is considered vulnerable to COVID-19.

Please note, both the HR and Health & Safety teams are available to help with advice, should you or your manager need it.

##### 1.1. Pre-existing medical conditions

A major factor that can make COVID-19 a severe illness is a pre-existing medical condition. COVID-19 is especially dangerous if one or more of these conditions are not well controlled.

Relevant conditions include:

- Serious respiratory disease, such as chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- Serious heart conditions
- Immunocompromised conditions
- Severe obesity — a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or higher
- Diabetes
- Chronic kidney disease
- People undergoing dialysis
- Liver disease.

Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including:

- Cancer treatment
- Smoking related illness
- Bone marrow or organ transplantation
- Hematologic neoplasms
- Immune deficiencies
- Poorly controlled HIV or AIDS
- Prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications such as disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drugs.

##### 1.2. Those 70 and over

The elderly, and in particular those with underlying health issues, are more vulnerable to COVID-19.

##### 1.3. Pregnant women

Health experts do not yet know if pregnant women are impacted by COVID-19 in the same way as other people. However, pregnant women experience changes in their bodies that may increase their risk factors. As a precaution, the Ministry of Health are considering pregnant women as vulnerable.

## **2. Actions you can take to protect yourself**

Staff should take extra precautions to protect themselves against all illnesses, including COVID-19 by,

- Avoiding contact with people who have cold or flu-like symptoms or diseases.
- Washing or sanitising your hands regularly – ensure you have access/supplies to do this.
- Performing proper protocols when coughing and sneezing – into the elbow, away from people.

Precautions staff should be taking specific to COVID-19 include,

- Staying at least 2 metres away from strangers or people outside your bubble.
- If you are unwell, avoid contact with people - especially those who are considered vulnerable.
- Following the advice given to you by health care professionals. For example, if you are considered vulnerable and are advised to wear a mask in public, you should do so.
- Seek out information and advice to protect yourself – the COVID-19 website is a great resource: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>