

Who should self-isolate

If you arrived in New Zealand **before** 1:00 am on Monday 16 March from any country (except China, Iran, Italy or South Korea) you do not need to self-isolate. If you arrived **after** 1:00 am on Monday 16 March from any country except those listed on the [countries and areas of concern under Category 2](#) you will need to self-isolate for 14 days.

If you have been in close contact with someone confirmed with COVID-19 you will need to self-isolate for 14 days from the date of contact.

If you become unwell while self-isolating

Contact Healthline for free on [0800 358 5453](tel:08003585453), or your GP if you begin to feel unwell. The symptoms of COVID-19 are cough, fever, and shortness of breath.

For all non-health related questions, call [0800 Government \(0800 779 997\)](tel:0800779997).

About self-isolation

Self-isolation is an effective precautionary measure to protect those around you – your family, friends, colleagues – from contracting COVID-19. It means taking simple, common-sense steps to avoid close contact with other people as much as possible, like you would with the seasonal flu virus. We know it's a stressful time, but taking these measures will help protect you, your family and all of New Zealand from COVID-19 and other common infectious diseases.

As much as possible, you should limit your contact with people other than the family members/companions you travelled with. You should avoid having visitors to your home, but it is okay for friends, family or delivery drivers to drop off food and supplies.

If you are in a home where the others who live with you haven't travelled or been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19, you should minimise close contact with them by avoiding situations where you have face-to-face contact closer than 2 metres for more than 15 minutes. The other household residents do not need to self-isolate provided these precautions are followed.

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, pillows or other items with other people in your home. After using these items, you should wash them thoroughly with soap and water, place them in the dishwasher for cleaning or wash them in your washing machine.

Contact Healthline for free on [0800 358 5453](tel:08003585453) if you begin to feel unwell. The symptoms of COVID-19 are cough, fever and shortness of breath.

If you need to call emergency services, please let them know you are in self-isolation.

For all non-health related questions, call [0800 Government \(0800 779 997\)](tel:0800779997).

Basic advice

Staying at home and self-isolating presents its own challenges, but there are things you can do to make the 14 days easier.

- If you are self-isolating after travelling internationally, plan ahead and think about what you need to be able to stay at home for the full 14 days before your return to New Zealand.

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- Talk to your employer, friends and family to ask for their help to access the things you will need.
- Talk to your employer to see if you can work from home during this time.
- Where possible, ask friends or family to drop off anything you need or order supplies online. Make sure any deliveries are left outside your home for you to collect. Many New Zealand companies are now offering a 'contactless' delivery option, where they notify you when they have delivered your order but remain nearby to ensure you receive it.
- You can keep in touch with friends and family over the phone or internet, but don't have physical contact with anyone who isn't isolating with you.
- Physical exercise is good for your wellbeing. Look for online classes or courses to help you take light exercise in your home.
- You can go outside, but you need to limit your contact with others. It's ok to go for a walk, run or ride your bike, as long as you avoid people who aren't self-isolating.
- Don't use public transport, taxis or similar transport methods during your 14-day period. You can use public transport after you arrive in New Zealand for the sole purpose of returning to your home, but cannot use it after that. You can use your own transport means (car, bike etc) whenever you wish.
- You can live with others during your 14 days, but you need to avoid close contact with them. This means you shouldn't share beds, linen or food.

Wash your hands often

You can protect yourself and the people you live with by cleaning your hands frequently throughout the day. You should use warm water and scrub with soap for at least 20 seconds before drying your hands thoroughly. You can also use hand sanitiser if your hands are not visibly dirty. Good hand hygiene is one of the most effective ways of reducing the risk of infection to you and to other people. If you live with others, they should also wash their hands regularly as a precaution.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

Cover your sneezes and coughs

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or cough or sneeze into your elbow. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can and immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, making sure you dry them thoroughly. You can also use hand sanitiser.

If you have a carer, they should use disposable tissues to wipe away any mucus or phlegm after you have sneezed or coughed. The cleaner should then clean their hands.

Facemasks

Facemasks are not recommended as an effective means of preventing the spread of infection. They play an important role in clinical settings, such as hospitals, but there's very little evidence of benefit from their use outside of these settings.

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While you stay at home, try to separate yourself from the people you live with

As much as possible, you should limit your contact with people other than the people you are self-isolating with. You should avoid having visitors to your home, but it is okay for friends, family or delivery drivers to drop off food.

If you are in a home where the others who live with you aren't self-isolating, you should minimise close contact with them by avoiding situations where you have face-to-face contact closer than 2 metres for more than 15 minutes. The other household residents do not need to self-isolate provided these precautions are followed.

Use your own toothbrushes, eating and drinking utensils (including cups and glasses in the bathroom and bedroom), dishes, towels, washcloths or bed linen. Do not share food and drinks or prepare food for others. Wash your clothing and dishes separate to others in your home.

It is fine to do gardening if you aren't in close contact with other members of your household.

Use of shared spaces in your home

You should not share a bed or a room with others during your 14-day isolation period. This includes sleeping in common areas.

Minimise the time you spend in shared spaces such as bathrooms, kitchens and sitting rooms as much as possible and keep shared spaces well ventilated. Clean surfaces like kitchen benches and sink tops after you use them and try to avoid touching them after you have cleaned them.

Make sure you use separate towels from other people in your house, both for drying yourself after bathing or showering and for drying your hands. Ask your family or the people you live with to remember to use their own towels.

If you use a shared toilet and bathroom, it's important that you clean them every time you use them (for example, wiping surfaces you have come into contact with). You may wish to be the last to use the shower/bath in the morning or evening to make this easier on those you live with. You should use your own toilet paper, hand towels, toothpaste and other supplies during your self-isolation.

If you share a kitchen with others, avoid using it while others are present. Take your meals back to your room to eat. It may be easier for someone else in your household to prepare your food so you can avoid the kitchen area. If you have one, use a dishwasher to clean and dry your used crockery and cutlery. If this is not possible, wash them using your usual washing up liquid and warm water and dry them thoroughly, remembering to use a separate tea towel.

We understand that it will be difficult for some people to separate themselves from others at home. You should do your very best to follow this guidance and everyone in your household should regularly wash their hands, avoid touching their face and clean frequently touched surfaces.

Visitors in your home

Don't invite or allow social visitors, such as friends and family, to enter your home. If you want to speak to someone who is not a member of your household, use the phone or other means of contact.

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Laundry

Do not shake dirty laundry, as this can disperse the virus through the air.

Wash items according to manufacturer's instructions. It's ok to wash your dirty laundry with the rest of your household if you do the washing yourself, but you should only fold and put away your own items. It may be easier for someone else to fold and put away clean shared laundry items (such as towels and tea towels) and provide a supply for you.

If you do not have a washing machine, wait until 72 hours after your 14-day isolation period has ended before taking your laundry to a laundrette.

Living with children

If your children don't need to self-isolate, they can continue to attend school and other normal activities. You should try to reduce your contact with them, but that may not be possible, particularly with young children.

Try to explain what is happening in a way that is easy to understand. Tell them you are staying at home to protect other people. Try to avoid worrying them. Remind them that you are being very safe to protect them and other New Zealanders.

So far, children with COVID-19 appear to be less severely affected. It is nevertheless important to do your best to follow this guidance.

If a child develops symptoms, you should contact Healthline. They will also need to stay at home for 14 days from the onset of their symptoms.

Breastfeeding

There is currently no clinical evidence to suggest that COVID-19 can be transmitted through breast milk. Infection can be spread to the baby in the same way as anyone else in close contact with you. The benefits of breastfeeding usually outweigh any potential risks of transmission of the virus through breast milk or by being in close contact with your child, however, this is an individual decision and can be discussed with your midwife, health advisor or GP by telephone.

If you wish to breastfeed, take precautions to limit the potential spread of COVID-19 to the baby by:

- washing your hands before touching the baby, breast pump or bottles
- avoiding coughing or sneezing on the baby while feeding at the breast
- cleaning any breast pump as recommended by the manufacturer after each use
- considering asking someone who is well to feed your expressed breast milk to the baby.

If you are feeding with formula or expressed milk, sterilise the equipment carefully before each use. You should not share bottles or a breast pump with someone else.

You can find more information at the [Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists website](#).

Living with older or vulnerable people

Evidence from other countries suggests that older people and vulnerable people (those who are immune-compromised or have pre-existing conditions like cardiovascular disease, diabetes or hypertension) are more at risk from COVID-19.

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If you live with an older or vulnerable person who doesn't need to self-isolate, they can continue their normal activities. You should reduce your close contact with them, however we understand that may be difficult.

If the person develops symptoms, you should contact Healthline on [0800 358 5453](tel:08003585453).

Using short-term accommodation

If you want or need to use short-term accommodation (such as a hotel, motel or vacation rental), you should let the proprietor know in advance that you need to self-isolate. Owners and operators must make their own decisions about whether they will allow you to use their accommodation, in compliance with regulations regarding their industry such as the Residential Tenancies Act 1986.

If you own or operate rental accommodation and have been in contact with someone who needs to self-isolate, you should consider the implications. The majority of people who need to self-isolate, especially those returning from overseas, will be healthy. If they self-isolate properly and cleaners follow [appropriate guidelines](#), there should be no risk to you or your future customers.

Transport

If you are self-isolating after being overseas, you may need to travel from the airport where you arrive to another part of New Zealand to get home, for example, by plane, train or bus. It is ok to continue on to the destination where you plan to self-isolate.

While travelling, you should use hand sanitiser regularly. Cough and sneeze into a tissue or your elbow. Where possible, sit in a window seat in a row by yourself. If you are unwell you should seek advice from Healthline before you travel onwards. Once you reach your destination, you cannot use public transport, taxis or similar methods until you finish your 14 days of self-isolation.

You can use your own transport, such as a car or bike, whenever you wish. This also applies to rental vehicles, provided you have informed the company of your need to self-isolate.

Mental health and wellbeing

Your emotional and mental health is important. It is normal to feel stressed or lonely when self-isolating, but there are some things you can do to feel better. [Information on managing your mental wellbeing](#).

Reach out to your usual supports, like family and friends, to talk about how you feel. We also recommend sticking to a routine such as having regular mealtimes, bedtimes and exercising.

If you feel you are not coping, it is important to talk with a health professional. For support with grief, anxiety, distress or mental wellbeing, you can call or text [1737](tel:1737) – free, anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – to talk with a trained counsellor.