

MEDIA RELEASE

20 August 2021

Public health advice for an extended Level 4 lockdown

NB: Please refer to the separate press release about vaccination options and locations.

Chief Medical Officer Dr Nick Baker offers advice to our communities as we enter an extended Level 4 period.

Know when to get tested

Dr Baker thanks the 1,677 people who have been tested on 18 and 19 August.

“At this time of year we are still seeing large numbers of people with respiratory infections from viruses such as RSV. The symptoms of RSV, cold and influenza are similar to COVID-19. It is critical that we can rule-out COVID-19 so please get a test if you have symptoms, and make sure your children are tested also if they have symptoms.”

You can phone Healthline (0800 358 54 53) or your GP if you're not sure about your symptoms. But please do not go straight to a medical centre to do this, or request a test – phone ahead first. They will tell you what to do.

Symptoms to be alert to:

- fever (at least 38°C)
- new or worsening cough
- sore throat
- shortness of breath
- sneezing and runny nose
- temporary loss of smell or altered sense of taste.

Less common symptoms may include diarrhoea, headache, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, or confusion/irritability.

Symptoms tend to arise after 5 days but can take up to 14 days to show after a person has been infected. The virus can be passed onto others before they know they have it – from up to two days before symptoms develop.

How many people are we testing?

Test data is published each day to our website: www.nmdhb.govt.nz/covid-19

Where people can get a test

1. At a Community Based Assessment Centres (CBAC) in Blenheim, Nelson or Tasman. This is walk-in testing, no appointments needed. Please wear a face mask and follow the instructions of the healthcare worker.

Locations and operating hours are listed online: www.nmdhb.govt.nz/covid-19 and also the HealthPoint website.

2. **At your regular GP clinic.** Appointments are needed, but there is no charge for testing. Phone ahead first if you are planning to visit your doctor and request a test. All GP practices in the Nelson Marlborough region are offering COVID-19 testing except for Tima Health in Nelson and Havelock Medical Centre. You can [view a full list of GPs offering COVID-19 testing and their opening hours on HealthPoint](#).

3. **After-hours clinics:** The Nelson Medical & Injury Centre and the Urgent Care Centre, Blenheim. After hours testing is also available in Golden Bay, Motueka and Murchison, see www.nmdhb.govt.nz/covid-19 for details.
4. **Testing is available for inpatients in hospitals and for people presenting to EDs in emergencies.**

Face masks are a must

Dr Baker says that masks are a must – excluding those exempted – if you have to leave your home and your bubble – wear a face mask everywhere you go. Wear it correctly so that it fits over your mouth and nose without gaps, and try to keep it clean.

“If you have to leave your bubble, in your face mask, it’s very important that you also do those other things that will help protect you from catching and spreading viruses. Wash or sanitise your hands regularly and thoroughly. Cover all coughs and sneezes and when your mask becomes damp or dirty – replace it.”

[The Ministry of Health explain how to wear a mask correctly and how to wash a cloth face mask.](#)

Make an informed choice about vaccination

“Vaccination is your best protection against the Delta variant,” Dr Baker says.

“Being fully vaccinated gives you a high degree of protection against Delta infection, and an even higher degree of protection against severe illness, hospitalisation and death. Evidence currently shows the effectiveness of two doses of the Pfizer vaccine against illness due to Delta infection is about 88% and the protection against hospitalisation due to Delta infection about 96%.

“However, no vaccine is 100% effective so there is some chance that a vaccinated person may become infected with the Delta variant and may transmit the virus to other people.

“This is why all the other precautions are critical to our chances of stopping this outbreak. Fully vaccinated people still need to follow the Alert Level rules, seek advice if they start to feel unwell and wear a mask when they leave their bubble.”

Know the locations of interest and keep looking

“As well as vaccination, early detection of cases, swift contact tracing and the isolation of cases and contacts, are critical factors,” Dr Baker says.

Locations of interest are constantly being updated as more cases are confirmed and the movements of cases and their close contacts are confirmed.

The list of locations is updated on the Ministry of Health website regularly and on social media from the Ministry of Health, Unite Against COVID-19 and Nelson Marlborough Health.

“If you’ve visited any location of interest during the relevant times, you should immediately isolate at home or accommodation and contact Healthline on 0800 358 5453.

“If you share accommodation with someone who has been in a location of interest, or have been in contact with them in some other way, you are also required to immediately isolate at home or accommodation and contact Healthline who will guide and support you through the next steps.”

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