

Introduction

This toolbox talk is about what to do as the Coronavirus (aka COVID-19) spreads through New Zealand and what you can do to protect yourself, your family and the people around you.

The most up-to-date information for New Zealand is at the [Ministry of Health website](#).

The disease

COVID-19 is a new contagious illness that can affect the lungs and airways; it is caused by a type of coronavirus. Experience of COVID-19 to date shows that all people are at risk of contracting the virus, however some people are at higher risk at getting very sick from this illness. This includes older adults and people who have medical conditions like heart disease, lung disease, asthma and diabetes.

It spreads through tiny droplets of saliva or body fluids spread by such things as talking, sneezing, kissing and coughing. The disease can survive on surfaces such as benchtops and door handles for a number of hours and can then be picked up from there which is why washing your hands is very important.

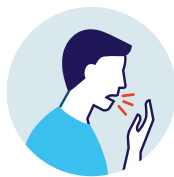
Signs and symptoms

Some people get a very mild form of the disease but it can kill some people quite quickly, especially if they have diabetes or heart disease.

The signs and symptoms are:



A high temperature.
(At least 38°C)



Coughing



Breathing problems

Milder symptoms can be helped with normal medicines but if there is trouble breathing people may need to go to hospital.

If you have these symptoms call the Ministry of Health's special COVID-19 number on **0800 358 5453 at any time**. Or call your doctor, but don't go in without warning them. We can't have doctors getting infected as they will have to go into isolation.

Most of the deaths are from fluid building up in the lungs so people can't breathe. Only about one in 100 people are dying but because it is so easy to spread, this could amount to a lot of people throughout the whole country.

Prevention

There is no cure or vaccine yet so preventing the spread is the best defence.



A face mask won't stop the virus but if fit correctly, it does help stop people touching their face to avoid any virus on their hands going into their mouths or eyes.



Because it attacks the lungs, if you smoke, stop now. There's never been a better time!



Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs and railings.



Wash your hands. Ordinary soap is even better than expensive hand sanitisers. A 20 second wash with soap will dissolve the virus's protective coating. Ensure that hands are thoroughly dried. Keep plenty of soap, water and disposable hand-towels on site.



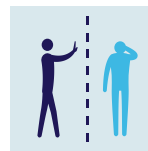
Stay home if you are sick. The Ministry of Health wants people suspected of having the virus to stay home and quarantine themselves for 14 days so make sure you have enough supplies to last that long. If one of your team is sick, send them home.



Cough into your elbow, not your hands. This helps stop the spread.



If you have been in contact with someone who has the disease, assume you may have it and stay home. Stopping the spread is our best weapon to stop our medical system getting swamped.



Follow the physical distancing and hygiene protocol. Staying one metre away from others whenever possible as this is an effective measure to stop the spread.

Self-isolation

If you are showing signs of being unwell or have recently arrived or returned from overseas (or have been in contact with someone who has) you may be required to self-isolate. Follow the Personal health flowchart and take appropriate actions. The situation is evolving so please visit the [Ministry of Health website](#) for the most up-to-date information.

COVID-19 Protocols

Industry protocols are in place for protecting workers against the risks of COVID-19. The procedures cover the 5 steps for operating a site including Before arriving on site, Site entry, Site operations, Leaving site and Management Protocols. The protocols are in addition to the normal health and safety obligations and include some useful guides and resources to assist with implementing the protocols on site. For more information and advice about COVID-19 visit [Unite Against COVID-19](#).