

## Guidance for Casual Plus Contacts

16 February 2021

This fact sheet provides information for people who have been identified as Casual Plus Contacts of a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19. A Casual Plus Contact is someone who has been exposed to a case where there may be a higher risk of transmission but who does not meet the criteria of a Close Contact.

As a Casual Plus Contact you will need to have a COVID-19 test, on or after day 5 from the date that you were *last* exposed to the case and you should self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms for 14 days from the date that you were exposed. If you already have symptoms, then you should get a test immediately and if this is before day 4 then you will also need another test around day 5 from the date that you were exposed.

It is important that you stay at home until you receive a negative test result.

As a Casual Plus Contact, you may be called by the Ministry of Health or Healthline and if you use the NZ COVID Tracer app you may also get a yellow notification via the app where the notification says 'Casual Plus Contact'.

### Staying at home

Isolation is an effective measure to protect the community from the spread of COVID-19. It means taking simple steps to reduce close physical contact with other people, like you would if you had the 'flu. It's important to do this even if you do not have symptoms as you can be infectious before knowing you've contracted COVID-19.

While you are staying at home, members of your household can come and go from the house as normal.

It is important to look after yourself, including your mental health, and if you feel that you are not coping it is important to talk with someone you trust or call 'Need to Talk' on 1737. We know it can be a stressful time, but taking these measures will help protect you, your family and all of New Zealand from COVID-19.

Talk to your friends and family and ask for their help to access the things you will need during this time. Talk to your employer to make arrangements to work from home if possible or discuss what leave you might be able to access.

### What to look out for

Most people who are a Casual Plus Contact do not get infected or become ill, but it is important to take note of any relevant symptoms for 14 days after you were in contact with the case. Seek prompt medical attention if you develop symptoms.

The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to common illnesses such as a cold or the 'flu. You may develop one or more of the following:

- a new or worsening cough
- a high temperature (at least 38°C)
- shortness of breath
- a sore throat
- sneezing and runny nose
- temporary loss of smell

Shortness of breath, or trouble breathing, is a sign of possible pneumonia so you should call 111 and tell them that you have been in casual contact with someone who has COVID-19.

If you develop any of these symptoms, call Healthline (for free) on 0800 358 5453, your doctor or an after-hours clinic for advice. Follow their instructions about how and where you should go to get tested. You should not leave home until you have discussed these symptoms with Healthline or a health professional.

Before seeking care, always tell the health care professional that you have been in casual contact with someone who is positive for COVID-19. Clean your hands with hand sanitiser and put on a face mask before you enter any healthcare facility. These steps will help the health care provider keep other people safe.

## Advice about staying at home

Staying at home can present its challenges, but there are things you can do to make this easier.

- You can keep in touch with friends and family over the phone or internet but you must not have any visitors in your home.
- Where possible, ask friends or family to shop for you or order supplies online. Make sure any deliveries are left outside your home for you to collect. Many New Zealand companies offer a 'contactless' delivery option, where they notify you when they have delivered your order but remain nearby to ensure you receive it.
- Physical exercise is good for your wellbeing. Look for online classes or courses to help you exercise in your home.
- You can go outside, but you need to limit your contact with others. It's okay to go for a walk, run or ride your bike, as long as you do not have any symptoms and you avoid other people by staying at least 2 metres away from them. **However, if you have any symptoms, please stay at home to reduce the risk of any spread.**
- Don't use public transport, taxis or similar transport methods while you are awaiting your negative test result.

## Clean your hands

Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, making sure you dry them thoroughly. You can also use hand sanitiser (containing at least 60 percent alcohol) if soap and water are not available and if your hands are not visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands. The same hand hygiene should apply to all of your household members.

## Cover your coughs and sneezes

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

## Keep your home or accommodation clean and ventilated

It is advised that you do not share a bed or a bedroom with others until you receive a negative test result.

Clean surfaces like kitchen benches and sink tops after you use them. If you have one, use a dishwasher to clean and dry your used crockery and cutlery, or wash dishes using your usual washing up liquid and warm water and dry them thoroughly.

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.

# Learning modules

The Ministry of Health has worked with Careerforce to create learning modules with useful advice on how to stop the spread of COVID-19.

The following modules are available on the Ministry of Health's LearnOnline website:

- [Cleaning your hands](#)
- [Stop the spread of COVID-19](#)
- [Helping others with their personal care needs](#)
- [Working as a caregiver in your home](#)

## More information and support

For the latest health advice, information and resources, visit the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 webpage [health.govt.nz/covid-19](https://www.health.govt.nz/covid-19) or call Healthline on 0800 358 5453, it is free and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Healthline has interpreters available if you would prefer to talk to someone in a different language.

It is important to look after yourself, including your mental health, and if you feel that 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 – free, anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – to talk with a trained counsellor.