

Information for people who are being tested for COVID-19 because they have symptoms

You are being tested because you are **unwell with symptoms** that could be COVID-19. The symptoms you have can also be caused by many other viruses, like influenza. We are only testing you today for COVID-19. The test is free.

What happens if I agree to be tested for COVID-19 today?

- You will have a swab taken from the back of your nose or throat.
- The **results are usually back within 1-3 days.**
- You **must stay at home in self-isolation** until you receive your results
- If you have not received notification of your result after 5 days, please follow up with the place your test was done or contact your General Practitioner to seek advice.

While you are waiting for your test results you should isolate yourself from others as much as possible:

- **Stay at home.** You need to stay in your home, or the place you are currently staying, **except** for getting medical care. Do not go out in the community. If travel to see a health professional is required, a face mask should be worn if available.
- **Separate yourself from other people in your home as much as you can.** If you can, you should stay in a specific room, away from others in your home. Limit the number of contacts within your bubble, ideally to one person who is in good health.
- **Avoid sharing household items.** Avoid sharing dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding or other items with other people in your home when you have used them. After using these items, wash them thoroughly. Use a separate bathroom, if possible.
- **Do not have visitors in your home.** People who drop things off to you should leave them on the doorstep. If it is urgent to speak to someone who you don't live with, do this by phone.

What happens next if my result is positive?

- If you have a confirmed **positive** result someone from Auckland Regional Public Health Service will call you to tell you.
- The Public Health Service will talk with you more about what this means for you, including for **how long you will need to stay in isolation.**
- Public Health will discuss with you the **isolation arrangements** for you and your household contacts (usually your family). You will be required to isolate in a managed facility unless suitable other arrangements are approved by the Medical Officer of Health. You will be supported to access any extra help you need.
- The Public Health Service will ask you about all the **people you have had contact with** recently and some of those people will be asked to stay at home (in self-isolation) in case they become unwell too.
- All close contacts will be required to be tested and to self-isolate. Only household close contacts will be requested to go to a managed facility.

What happens next if my result is negative?

If your test result is **negative** you should be notified about it via **text message** or a phone call. The message will direct you to Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) (<https://bit.ly/ARPHSNegRes>) for further instructions. **For most people, a negative result means you should stay home until you feel completely well again for at least 24 hours** so you don't pass on the illness you have to others. Talk with your General Practitioner or primary care provider about when you are able to return to work.

Some people who return a negative result may need to stay in self-isolation for a longer time, for a variety of reasons. *You must stay in self-isolation if you have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19, until you have completed 14 days of self-isolation.* This is 14 days from your last contact with the person confirmed as having COVID-19. ARPHS' website explains this and any other situations where staying in isolation for longer is necessary. If in doubt, phone your GP or ring the COVID-19 Healthline on 0800 358 5453.

Having a negative test now does not mean you can't get COVID-19 in the future. If you become unwell again with symptoms that could be COVID-19 you should be tested again.

What do I do if I start to feel worse?

If you feel worse, you should phone your GP or ring the COVID-19 Healthline on 0800 358 5453. Healthline is a free 24/7 service with interpreters available. You need to **let them know you have been tested for COVID-19 already.**

If you have difficulty breathing, are severely unwell or it is an emergency, call for an ambulance on 111. Tell them that you are awaiting a COVID-19 swab result.

What happens to the information collected about me?

Your information will be shared with those who are monitoring and managing COVID-19 in our community. This may include your GP, healthcare organisations such as Public Health, the Ministry of Health, your employer and your whānau. This is to enable important activities such as contact tracing to occur. We will only use and disclose your personal information if that is permitted by law. You have a right to access and correct information held about you.

How can I protect myself and others from COVID-19?

- Thoroughly wash and dry your hands often through the day. Use soap and water.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues, or cough or sneeze into your bent elbow. Place used tissues in the rubbish bin, wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water, then dry them well.
- Clean surfaces regularly, especially before others use them.
- Maintain your distance from others whenever possible, and wear a mask (or other face covering such as a bandana or scarf if you don't have a mask) when you are out in public.

Where can I go for more advice?

For COVID-19 health advice and information, call the COVID-19 phone line 0800 358 5453. For other health advice call Healthline on 0800 611 116. Healthline operates 24/7 and interpreters are available. Note, Healthline will NOT be able to access your results.

You can get more information from [Auckland Regional Public Health Service: www.arphs.health.nz](http://www.arphs.health.nz).