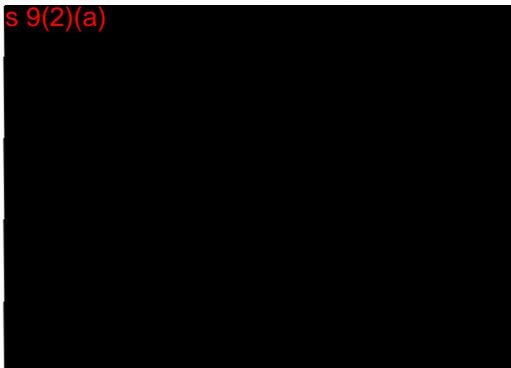


s 9(2)(a)



Response to your request for official information

Thank you for your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) on 21 July 2021. I will respond to each part of your request in turn.

1. What is the currently used cycle threshold for the PCR tests being used to diagnose Covid 19.

The number of cycles will depend on the test platform being used in the different laboratories. There are typically between 35 and 40 cycles run to ensure we detect even cases with very low viral loads.

2. Has the cycle threshold changed since the WHO recommendation earlier this year recommended lowering it to more accurately represent viral load.

The cycle threshold has not changed since testing began. The current thresholds used enable us to detect both acute cases, which tend to have a higher viral load, and historical cases, which tend to have a lower viral load.

3. Is influenza testing proceeding together with Covid testing to clarify if both diseases are circulating?

Influenza testing is not routinely undertaken at the same time as COVID-19 testing. However, we do have an influenza surveillance system in place to detect cases of influenza in New Zealand. To date, we have not detected influenza this season via the surveillance system.

I trust this information fulfils your request. Under section 28(3) of the Act you have the right to ask the Ombudsman to review any decisions made under this request. The Ombudsman may be contacted by email at: info@ombudsman.parliament.nz or by calling 0800 802 602.

Please note that this response, with your personal details removed, may be published on the Ministry website at: www.health.govt.nz/about-ministry/information-releases/responses-official-information-act-requests.

Nāku noa, nā



Gill Hall
**Group Manager COVID-19 Science and Insights
COVID-19 Health System Response**