

COVID-19

Childhood immunisation and wearing PPE in Alert Level 4

25 August 2021

In Alert Level 4, it is important that general practices and outreach services across the country continue delivering essential health services, including on-time delivery of the childhood immunisation schedule vaccines.

Guidance when in GP clinics

- Follow the same process as when managing patients coming into clinics in Alert Level 4 with no respiratory issues. This includes a pre-appointment screening for COVID-19 risk.
- We recommend the healthcare worker to use a medical mask.
- Where at all possible, vaccinate at the side of the child.
- Perform hand hygiene, it is not necessary to wear gloves gown or eye protection, **but** you should follow your own clinic's IPC protocols.
- Depending on your clinic circumstances, you may wish to consider offering vaccination services in cars. IMAC is developing further advice to support this option.

Guidance when in private homes and other outreach service situations

While each provider will have their own guidance and protocols in place for use of PPE, our advice is set out in the [Ministry of Health COVID-19 PPE guide for community care providers working Alert Levels 3 and 4](#).

This states that when caring for someone who is not a probable or confirmed COVID-19 case, and does not meet the Clinical and Higher Index of Suspicion (HIS) Criteria¹, hand hygiene and wearing a mask are required. Please note that at Alert Level 4, everyone with respiratory symptoms is considered high risk. Always pre-screen for COVID-19 risk before making a home visit.

Ngā mihi

It is important that pregnancy, infant and childhood immunisation remain a priority as New Zealand's immunisation rates have recently been declining. We saw coverage drop following lockdowns last year, with disparities by ethnicity and deprivation particularly leaving many tamariki Māori and Pacific children vulnerable. Thank you for maintaining the immunisation programme during this challenging period to keep control of other vaccine-preventable diseases.

Key contacts

Immunisation@health.govt.nz