



# COVID-19

## Guidance for parents and caregivers of tamariki with COVID-19

16 March 2022

This fact sheet provides information for people who are caring for tamariki (children) who have tested positive for COVID-19.

### What it's like

Most tamariki with COVID-19 generally have mild symptoms. With Omicron, symptoms generally last for about a week, and are similar to a cold.

Some children might be sick for longer. Teenagers and those with severe underlying conditions are more at risk of needing to go to hospital. If you are concerned your child is very unwell, seek urgent medical help.

Your child's wellbeing comes first but here are some ways you can reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19:

- Follow healthy habits like handwashing, wearing masks, opening windows, and regularly cleaning other surfaces.
- They can still pass COVID-19 on to others, so they need to stay home and isolate away from others if possible, particularly if there are others in the house who are more at risk of getting seriously sick with COVID-19. If you can, have tamariki with COVID 19 stay in another part of the house with a caregiver.
- Use a separate bathroom if you have one. If you don't have a separate bathroom, try and ensure other people in the house use the bathroom first. Clean all bathroom surfaces thoroughly after your sick tamariki has used it.
- If possible, have tamariki wear a mask when in the same room as others, especially with anyone who is more at risk of getting sick with COVID-19.

### Manage their symptoms

Go to the COVID health hub to see what symptoms you can expect: <https://covid19.health.nz/advice/covid-19-symptoms>

Keep up the fluids. If they don't want to drink water, try ice blocks, watered-down juice or electrolyte solution. Drinking is important to stop dehydration, so encourage them to keep drinking their normal amount. Keep an eye on their nappies/toilet breaks to make sure they're drinking enough.



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They may have vomiting, diarrhoea, tummy pain, and muscle aches. They also may not want to eat much, which is alright for a short time.

You can offer paracetamol or ibuprofen if they are uncomfortable with pain and fever, Make sure you check the dose with their GP or pharmacist first . As COVID-19 is a viral illness, antibiotics won't make any difference to the how long or how sick your tamariki might be.

Rest is important. Even when they're feeling better, they may still need to take it easy for a while to let their bodies recover.

Watch this video from the Starship Foundation for more on how to care for tamariki here:

<https://vimeo.com/683604724/b895827de7>

## When to call for help

You should be able to manage at home, but if your child gets more unwell, please call your GP or Healthline on 0800 358 5453. Things to watch for are:

- drinking less than half their normal breastmilk or other fluids.
- looking unwell, pale, cold to touch, floppy or very drowsy
- vomiting half (or more) of their last 3 feeds
- frequent and watery poo
- urine is very dark, or has blood in it or they have less than 4 wet nappies in 24 hours
- breathing fast hard or noisily
- fever that lasts for 5 or more days
- severe chest or tummy pain, or their sore throat is getting worse
- their headache is not going away with painkillers.

Call 111 (and tell the operator your child has COVID 19 ) if your child:

- has a sudden change in breathing (eg, they can't talk, take irregular or fast breaths, or are struggling to breathe) or has blue lips or tongue
- passes out
- is difficult to wake up or are very drowsy.
- has a worrying rash
- has been involved in a serious accident.

## Look after the mental wellbeing of your whanau

Look after your mental wellbeing, and that of your whānau. There's lots of resources available to support you, and the wellbeing of your tamariki, go to <https://covid19.health.nz/advice/mental-health>

If you want to, you can speak with a trained counsellor any time, day or night — free call or text on 1737.