

Guidance for Casual Contacts

16 February 2021

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

As a Casual Contact you should self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms for 14 days from the date that you were exposed to the case. There is no requirement that you stay at home or stay away from other people, **unless** you are unwell or develop symptoms.

If you develop symptoms, you should arrange to get a test as soon as possible and stay at home and away from other people including those in your household, until you receive a negative test result.

If you use the NZ COVID Tracer app and you scanned into a location of interest at the same time as a confirmed or probable case, you may also get a yellow notification via the app where the notification says 'Casual Contact'.

What to look out for

Most people who are a Casual 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. **If you have any symptoms, please stay at home to reduce the risk of any spread.**

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.

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.

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.