

National Hospital Response Group

Guidance for Hospital visiting under COVID 19 Alert Level 1

Background

With the Government's declaration that New Zealand will now move to COVID 19 Alert Level 1, many of the visiting restrictions will no longer be necessary, nor desirable.

Whilst New Zealand has moved to Alert Level 1 it is important to note that this is still a global pandemic and future surges are still possible. It is important that the public and DHBs remain vigilant and continue to follow public health advice regarding hygiene to mitigate the risk of undetected community transmission.

Whilst physical distancing is no longer necessary, it is encouraged, particularly where there are people vulnerable to infection or where people with infectious illnesses are likely to be present.

Guidance

The National Hospital Visitors Policy, issued by the Hospital Response Group, has not been rescinded because COVID 19 remains a global pandemic and it would be relevant in the event of any future surges. However, it is now appropriate, at Alert Level 1, for DHBs to determine the visiting arrangements necessary for each of their clinical areas, within the context of the ongoing global pandemic, and with the use of some common messaging.

Key messages

- There are no physical distancing requirements at Alert Level 1, but the more space there is between you and others, the harder it is for the COVID-19 virus, and other viruses (e.g. the common cold or influenza) to spread.
- Visitors are important for patients' recovery, but so is rest, so a balance is important
- Let's keep each other safe. Look after your own health and look after our health workers and patients by avoiding overcrowding and ensuring that we can maintain an appropriate distance from each other, in the hospital setting.
- Different hospital and clinical units will have different rules so that they can achieve these things – so please check your DHB's website for visiting arrangements for the clinical area you wish to visit.
- It will sometimes be necessary for staff to limit visitor numbers in order to keep everyone safe.
- DHBs may limit visitors in order to support high quality patient care – for example visitors may be restricted during doctors' ward rounds.
- If you are unwell, stay home.
- Follow the good hygiene principles: wash your hands, cough or sneeze into your elbow
- Use the app to track your visit