ALERT LEVEL 3: HEALTH AND DISABILITY SECTOR RISK ASSESSMENT FOR INTERACTIONS WITH PEOPLE OF UNKNOWN COVID-19 STATUS TO DETERMINE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Risk Assessment

This is a risk assessment for first point of contact with people whose COVID-19 status is unknown. Please ask the questions before contact with the person if possible (by phone or signage); otherwise maintain physical distancing of at least 2 metres while asking them.¹ No matter what a person’s COVID-19 status is, follow Standard Precautions for all care.² Refer to your organisational IPC guidance also.

Note: The risk of community transmission remains high in Alert Level 3. Guidance will be updated if this context changes.

Question 1: Does the person have new or worsening respiratory symptoms including one of the following: cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, runny nose or temporary loss of smell, with or without fever?

- Yes
- No

If Yes: This person may have COVID-19. Provide them with a mask to wear and help them get assessed by a health care provider so their COVID-19 status can be determined. If you cannot maintain 2 metres physical distancing you should wear a surgical mask. Ensure they are at least 2 metres from others, or move to a single room if available. If the person needs care, clinical assessment or a procedure within 2 metres, please refer to PPE guidance when caring for a COVID-19 case.³

If No: Apply Standard Precautions depending on nature of care to be provided.²

Question 2: In the last 14 days has the person had close contact with other people who were unwell with respiratory symptoms and fever, or had close contact with a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case, had international travel,⁴ had direct contact with a person who has travelled overseas, worked on an international aircraft or shipping vessel or cleaned at an international airport or maritime port or in areas/conveniences visited by international arrivals?

- Yes
- No

If Yes: Provide the patient/client a mask to wear. Ensure they are at least 2 metres away from others, or move them into a single room if available. If you cannot maintain 2 metre physical distancing you should wear a surgical mask. Other PPE may be needed depending on the nature of the care to be provided. Refer to PPE use for community care providers: requirements for providing care in people’s homes.³

If No: Apply Standard Precautions depending on nature of care to be provided.²

Question 3: For care being provided in people’s place of residence only.⁵ Is the person at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 (as per www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-health-advice-general-public)?

- Yes
- No

If Yes: If you cannot maintain 2 metre physical distancing you should wear a surgical mask. Other PPE may be needed depending on the nature of the care to be provided. Refer to PPE use for community care providers: requirements for providing care in people’s homes.³

If No: Apply Standard Precautions depending on nature of care to be provided.²

¹ This assessment will determine whether you need to take extra IPC precautions because they are at risk of having COVID-19, or they have been potentially exposed to COVID-19 in the past two weeks, and therefore have a very low risk of being pre-symptomatic or an asymptomatic COVID-19 case.
² Refer to Frequently Asked Questions about PPE: What are standard precautions?
³ www.health.govt.nz/ppe-health
⁴ People who have had recent overseas travel or are close contacts of probable or confirmed COVID-19 cases are advised to remain in isolation. Unless it is an emergency requiring an ambulance, they should only be presenting in the situation they require urgent care and have phoned ahead to determine that face to face assessment is required.
⁵ This guidance provides additional protection for the very low risk of potential asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic transmission between the health or disability care worker who has interactions with multiple people on a daily basis, and a person in their place of residence who is at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 (noting a place of residence is usually different to the controlled environment of a health care setting).