COVID-19

Information for community-based midwives at Alert Level 2

9 September 2021

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on preventing the spread of COVID-19 in home and community settings, and on protecting both pregnant and postnatal women, and their community-based Lead Maternity Carer midwives.

This information sheet should be read in conjunction with information available at health.govt.nz/covid-19

Symptoms and how COVID-19 is spread


COVID-19, like the flu, is mostly spread from person to person when a person who has COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or talks. Larger and heavier droplets quickly fall to the ground or other surfaces within seconds or minutes. Smaller particles (aerosols) can remain airborne for minutes to hours.

Getting vaccinated, staying home if you’re sick, wearing a mask, physical distancing and basic hygiene measures are the most important way to stop the spread of infections, including COVID-19.


Information for community-based midwives at Alert Level 2

Alert Level 2 represents a decrease in the risk of COVID-19 exposure in the community, however as health professionals, midwives need to continue to be vigilant in public health measures. At Alert Level 2 the schedule for the provision of midwifery care for women should remain normal, where possible. Women and any support people must wear a mask during the in-person visits and that midwife should also wear a mask.

There is still the option for the provision of phone or video consultations for first and second trimester care, if deemed clinically appropriate and safe to do so. Women in the third trimester should receive in-person visits. Women who may not receive appropriate levels of care through virtual consultations (i.e. for complex clinical, social, economic, or mental health concerns), regardless of trimester of pregnancy, should be offered in-person appointments.
See the advice for using PPE and the poster for maternity use at [health.govt.nz/ppe-health](http://health.govt.nz/ppe-health). If the COVID-19 status of the woman is unknown, ask the Alert Level 2: Risk assessment questions (at [health.govt.nz/ppe-health](http://health.govt.nz/ppe-health)) before contact with them if possible; otherwise maintain physical distance of at least 1 metre while asking them. This will help determine what infection prevention and control precautions are needed.

The New Zealand College of Midwives have provided professional guidance for community-based midwives for Alert Level 2: [https://www.midwife.org.nz/midwives/covid-19/covid-19-information-for-lmcs/](https://www.midwife.org.nz/midwives/covid-19/covid-19-information-for-lmcs/)

The Midwifery Council of New Zealand acknowledges midwives have had to change the way they work during this pandemic. The Council reminds midwives they need to remain aware of the parameters around the midwifery scope of practice, and further, they must always work within the limits of their competence. Further advice is provided in the Council’s statement on midwifery practice in national and international emergencies at [midwiferycouncil.health.nz/about-us/publications/midwifery-council-statement-re-covid-19](http://midwiferycouncil.health.nz/about-us/publications/midwifery-council-statement-re-covid-19)

Community-based midwifery care to women who are not probable or confirmed COVID-19 cases, and do not meet the Clinical and Higher Index of Suspicion (HIS) criteria

Community-based midwifery care for pregnant, labouring and postnatal women and their babies should continue. New evidence shows that pregnant women and newborn babies may be at greater risk of poor outcomes if infected with COVID-19. Pregnant and recently pregnant women (defined as within six weeks of birth, miscarriage, or termination) may consider taking extra precautions.

Basic hygiene measures, including staying home when you are unwell, hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, as well as regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces, are the most important way to stop the spread of respiratory infections, including COVID-19.

Please note, PPE is required when providing in-person care for these women. See recommendations on the PPE required for maternity at [health.govt.nz/ppe-health](http://health.govt.nz/ppe-health)

Providing midwifery care to women who are probable or confirmed COVID-19 cases, or meet the Clinical and Higher Index of Suspicion (HIS) criteria

Urgent midwifery care for these women and their babies should continue. The most appropriate place for the urgent assessment to take place might be your local DHB.

Refer to Table 1: Advice for community-based midwives caring for women who are probable, or confirmed COVID-19 cases, or meet the Clinical and Higher Index of Suspicion (HIS) criteria at [health.govt.nz/covid-19-maternity](http://health.govt.nz/covid-19-maternity). This provides specific advice for care before and after 37w0d, during labour and birth, and postnatally.

When an in-person visit is required, minimise time spent undertaking physical assessments.

Please note full PPE is required when caring for these women in-person. See recommendations on the PPE required for maternity at [health.govt.nz/ppe-health](http://health.govt.nz/ppe-health)
Ensure the woman wears a surgical mask for the duration of the visit.

Non-urgent in-person midwifery consultations should be rescheduled until after the woman has fulfilled the criteria outlined by the local Public Health Unit, if possible.

A labour and birth care plan must be developed in collaboration with the woman, multi-disciplinary DHB team and the community midwife. If a transfer of clinical responsibility to the DHB team for labour and birth is required, the community midwife does not attend the labour and birth.

If a woman requires hospitalisation at any point during her pregnancy or postnatal period, due to the severity of her COVID-19 illness, her clinical care is transferred to the DHB team until the point of discharge home.

**Going to work**

Community-based midwives must not go to work if they have:

- experienced cold or flu symptoms. Workers should be symptom free for 48 hours before returning to work
- been advised they need to self-isolate due to being a being in a place of interest. Midwives must follow the requirements stipulated by the Public Health Unit
- been in close contact with a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case. Midwives must follow the requirements stipulated by the Public Health Unit.

If you have provided care to a COVID-19 confirmed woman, or a woman who is symptomatic and is awaiting test results, but have followed all the recommended protective measures, you should continue to work normally.

If you develop symptoms you should phone Healthline on **0800 358 5453** or your doctor.

**More information**

For the latest advice, information and resources go to [health.govt.nz/covid-19](http://health.govt.nz/covid-19) or [covid19.govt.nz](http://covid19.govt.nz)

If you are symptomatic or are at risk of exposure call Healthline on **0800 358 5453**. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If you have concerns about your health, speak to a doctor.