



## COVID-19 Alert Level 2

01 March 2021

- Back to Alert Level 2 - **reminder**
- Mask requirement and FIT testing update - **important information**
- Payments for self-isolating staff - **for information**
- Hawke's Bay Hospital is very busy - **for information**

With Hawke's Bay back at Alert Level 2 and Auckland at Alert Level 3, we're all adjusting the way we work. Health Hawke's Bay is here to support you so please contact [Fiona Thomson](mailto:fiona.thomson@hbhc.org.nz) (029 2911310) if you need assistance or have any concerns.

**Reminder of health and disability services at Alert Level 2:** We've been here before so we know what to do, but here's a quick recap of what operating at Level 2 means for our sector:

- Services will open and operate normally where possible, while managing public health risks.
- Strict hygiene measures and physical distancing measures will remain in place.
- Infection prevention and control principles must be adhered to across the system.
- Testing for COVID-19 will continue at community-based assessment centres (CBACs), designated practices, and some general practices.

For further details visit the [Ministry of Health website](https://www.health.govt.nz/). We are also issuing another reminder to Hawke's Bay residents and sending a panui to Pasifika and Māori community groups and stakeholders reminding people to call their doctor and not delay being seen during Alert Level 2 over the next seven days.

**Mask requirements and FIT testing update:** The Ministry of Health (MoH) have [approved the use of N95s](#) in primary care in some circumstances. The current advice is:

- There is no evidence of community transmission / outbreak in Hawke's Bay, therefore surgical masks are adequate protection.
- However, if there was evidence of community transmission in Hawke's Bay, staff working with symptomatic or undifferentiated patients, or swabbing should use the N95 masks.
- The best protection is an N95, fitted mask.
- The next best protection is an unfitted N95 mask.
- The next best protection is a surgical mask.
- Wearing an N95 does not negate the need for other PPE, including but not limited to a face shield, gloves and gown.

Health Hawke's Bay, and the Ministry, understand the burden that FIT testing will place on the sector. If we enter a phase of community transmission before general practice has time to get it done, then the MoH will waive that pre-requisite and will release stocks of N95s to organisations that have not completed FIT testing (as they have done for Auckland today).

**Payments for self-isolating staff:** Please be aware that there is a short-term absence payment in place (\$350 for each employer) for those staying at home if they are waiting on a COVID-19 test result. You can read more about this and other financial support that is available for individuals and whānau experiencing financial pressure as a result of COVID-19 [here](#). The forms to apply for the \$350 short-term absence payment are available on the [Work and Income website](#).

**Hawke's Bay Hospital is very busy:** The hospital is very busy. The DHB is urging people to choose well, leave ED for emergencies only and seek medical help for minor illnesses and injuries from their GP, accident or medical centre or call Healthline. Unless it is an emergency any patients referred to ED can expect to wait a long time as ED prioritises patients who need urgent care. A reminder that under Alert Level 2 no visitors or support people are allowed to ED - although discretion will be applied for children or for people with special care needs by the Clinical Nurse Manager or shift coordinator.

