

# COVID-19 INFORMATION SHEET



## What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a contagious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). It typically spreads from person-to-person through small droplets, for example by coughing, sneezing or even talking and singing. These droplets can remain in the air for long periods. If ingested, the virus can reach your lungs and cause you to contract COVID-19.

## How might I know if I have COVID-19?

There are several symptoms associated with COVID-19:



*Fever*



*Cough*



*Shortness of breath*



*Sore throat*



*Headache*



*Aching muscles*



*Loss of taste  
or smell*



*Chills*

The pack you have been provided with contains a thermometer to check whether you or your family/whānau have a high temperature. Please follow instructions provided.

If you are isolating at home and your symptoms get worse, please contact your General Practice Team or Healthline for advice on how to get tested for COVID-19.

## Where can I get a COVID test?

There is a designated testing site at 575 Main Street, Palmerston North.

You do not need to book for a test, but during busy periods there may be a wait.

Please be patient – the staff are working as quickly as they can.

A number of general practices and after-hours medical centres in Palmerston North, Levin, Ōtaki, Feilding, Dannevirke and Pahiatua are also providing COVID-19 testing.

For an up-to-date list of testing sites and opening hours, please see the MidCentral DHB website [www.covid19.mdhb.health.nz/](http://www.covid19.mdhb.health.nz/)

If you are displaying symptoms, and you intend to visit your General Practice Team, please phone ahead so you can follow their instructions.

# What can I do to prevent contracting COVID-19 or spreading it to others?

- Stay home. Leave the house only for essential tasks, such as grocery shopping or visiting a pharmacy, doctor and COVID-19 testing site.
- Wear a mask if you leave home.
- Use the COVID Tracer App, or sign in manually when visiting public spaces.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 per cent alcohol.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth, especially with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are showing symptoms of illness.
- Clean and disinfect objects or surfaces that are frequently touched.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use your elbow. Throw the tissue in the rubbish and be sure to clean your hands.

## When are test results returned?

- Your swab is taken to the Palmerston North laboratory to be processed. The time this takes depends on how busy the laboratory is, but you can usually expect to receive your result **within 48 hours**. During peak periods, the teams process significant volumes of swabs and you may experience some delays.
- **If your test result is negative** for COVID-19, you will receive a text message directly from the laboratory. You should stay at home until you have been symptom free for 24 hours.
- **Anyone with a positive result** will receive a phone call from staff at one of 12 Public Health Units (PHU) around the country, which collaborate together to fight outbreaks. You will be asked a series of questions which will help us to understand where you may have contracted the virus, as well as where you have been and who you have been in contact with. We ask these questions so we can stop further spread of COVID-19. You will need to stay in isolation until you are released by the staff at the PHU.
- **Contacts of a case of COVID-19** will usually be required to isolate at home for a period of time. This will depend on the degree of exposure (how long you were in the same space as the case, and how close you came to them). For close contacts you should normally be expected to stay in isolation for 14 days, during which time you will need to have several tests.
- You will be phoned each day by staff from a PHU and asked whether you have developed any symptoms, or if you have any welfare needs. **At the end of the isolation period** and provided your tests are negative, you will be released from isolation. If you still have symptoms, you should remain at home until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours. You are then required to comply with rules pertaining to any Alert Level changes.