



COVID-19 isolation protocols

This document clarifies some of the commonly used definitions relating to COVID-19 terminology and isolation requirements.

Definition of commonly used terms

- **Managed isolation:** The patient has been moved managed isolation and quarantine (MIQ), and is under strict isolation, usually under a Section 70 notice from the Medical Officer of Health (MOH).
- **Self-isolation:** The patient can stay at home but needs to avoid contact with other family/flat members. The MOH may be involved. [Read guidance.](#)
- **Stay at home:** The patient should stay at home and not have visitors but is able to mingle with other members of the household. [Read guidance.](#)

COVID-19 case terminology

- **Confirmed:** by definitive laboratory evidence
- **Probable:** close contact of a confirmed case with high exposure, meets clinical criteria and either testing can't be done, or negative PCR was more than seven days after onset of symptoms

High index of suspicion (HIS) patient

Has symptoms meeting clinical criteria of COVID-19 and in 14 days prior to onset of symptoms has:

- travelled internationally*
- had direct contact with a person who has travelled in the preceding 14 days* e.g. customs and immigration staff, staff of isolation/quarantine facilities.
- exited MIQ (excluding recovered COVID-19 cases)
- won an international aircraft* or shipping vessel
- cleaned at international airport or maritime port in areas/conveniences visited by international arrivals*
- worked in cold storage areas of facilities that receive imported chilled and frozen good directly from an international airport or maritime port
- any of criteria requested by the local MOH.

*Excluding those who have travelled by air from a country/area with which NZ has quarantine free travel.

Other symptomatic patients: These are symptomatic people who are NOT HIS, or contacts of a case.

Close contact

Any person with the following exposure to a confirmed or probable case without appropriate PPE:

- direct contact with body fluid or laboratory specimen of the case
- living in same household (or household like setting) as a case
- face-to-face within 2 meters for longer than 15 minutes
- in high risk* closed environment or other closed environment** within 2 meters for more than 15 minutes
- seated in aircraft within 2 meters of a case
- aircraft crew exposed to a case



- Anyone who receives an orange Bluetooth notification from the NZ COVID Tracer App.

*High risk as determined by medical officer of health

** e.g., classroom, waiting room, vehicle

Casual contact

- people who have had exposure to a case but don't meet the criteria for Close Contract or casual plus contact
- anyone who receives notification of being casual contact via the COVID tracer App).

Isolation requirements for known and suspected cases of COVID-19

There are three situations where some form of social isolation is required. These situations roughly relate to either alert levels 3 and 4, and 1 and 2; however, the following information is patient specific.

Scenario 1: Patient has been diagnosed with COVID-19

Status	Action
Patient is COVID-19 positive	Notify local Medical Officer of Health, self-isolate (or MIQ as per medical officer of health).
Close contacts	Will be contacted by Public Health (PHU) tested and advised to self-isolate.
Casual contacts symptomatic	Test, stay at home until symptoms gone for 24 hours and negative test as per medical Officer of health.
Casual contact no symptoms	Normal activities, monitor for symptoms (test and stay at home if develop).

Scenario 2 HIS patient with symptoms

Status	Action	Follow up
Patient is HIS	Test, notify medical officer of health and self-isolate (at home or MIQ if necessary) whilst test pending and until 24 hours after symptoms resolved.	Testing intervals determined by medical officer of health.
Symptomatic close contact	Test, stay at home whilst test pending and until 24 hours after symptoms resolve.	
Asymptomatic close contacts	No restrictions.	

Scenario 3 symptoms meeting clinical criteria for COVID-19

Offer to Test ANYONE with symptoms consistent with clinical criteria for COVID 19

Status	Action	Advice for their contacts:
Symptomatic	Offer test and advise to stay at home.	Close contact or casual contact with no symptom – normal activities at levels 1 and 2.