

What do I need to do RIGHT NOW to stay safe and healthy?

20 March 2020

What do I need to do RIGHT NOW to stay safe and healthy?

Right now we need to do everything we can to prevent ourselves from coming in contact with the COVID-19 virus. This means being careful, clean and making a plan: don't be scared, be prepared.

What to do right now

Be Clean and Careful

Wash your hands

Wash your hands often, especially:

- After you use the bathroom
- After you cough, sneeze or blow your nose
- When you get home
- Before you eat or prepare food

Use soap and water, and wash them for at least 20 seconds.

Dry your hands carefully too.

Wash and dry your hands often, even when you are at home.

Soap kills any viruses that may be on your hands.

Don't touch your face

Try to avoid touching your:

- Nose
- Mouth
- Eyes

Unless you have just washed your hands.

Your hands touch lots of things every day and can pick up viruses.

If you have viruses on your hands, touching your face can make you sick.

Wash your hands before and after you touch your face.

Stay away from sneezes

Stand at least two metres away from anyone who is coughing or sneezing.

When people cough or sneeze they spray small droplets which may have viruses in them into the air.

If you stand too close you might breathe in the droplets, which could make you sick.

Stand or sit two metres away from anyone coughing or sneezing, even if you are at home.

Two metres away is a safe distance if someone is coughing or sneezing. Two metres is about the same length as a couch, or your bed.

Cover your coughs

If you need to cough or sneeze, cover your nose and mouth with:

- Your bent elbow (not your hands)
- OR a tissue, then throw it in the bin
- Wash your hands after coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose or touching your face

When you cough or sneeze you spray small droplets which may have viruses in them into the air. If other people breathe them in they might get sick

Cover your coughs and sneezes, even when you are at home. Keep others safe.

Keep sickness at home

If you feel sick, even if it's just a little bit (for example if you have a cold):

- Stay at home until you feel better
- Try to stay in a separate room from people you live with
- Don't go to work, school, or social events
- Don't visit your friends or family, or have them visit you
- Don't go out and visit shops or public areas.
- Don't use public transport, taxis or Ubers

Contact your usual healthcare provider for advice if you are worried. They will tell you what to do to keep yourself and other people healthy.

Stay at home until you feel better, keep others safe.

Find the facts

Lots of people are talking about COVID-19 right now. It can be confusing when lots of people are saying different things. Make sure you get your information from official sources like the Ministry of Health and the COVID-19 website.

If people tell you new information, ask where they got it from – make sure it's official! You can use Google to check where the information is from, or ask someone you trust to check if it is a fact.

Keep up to date with facts, not rumours.

Physical distancing

What is “physical distancing”?

Physical distancing (sometimes known as ‘social distancing’) is about keeping a safe distance from others. This means standing or sitting far enough away from other people to prevent sharing germs.

Physical distancing is very important, because it can slow down how fast a virus can spread from person to person.

How to practice Physical distancing

Stay two metres away

Try to stay two metres away from people you see out in public, at work, and at school. If you are feeling sick, try to stay two metres away from people you live with as well.

Two metres is about the length of a couch, or your bed.

Don't stay close for more than 15 minutes

If you can't stay two metres away from other people, make sure you are not close to them for very long. Don't stay close to people you see out in public, at work and at school for more than 15 minutes. If you are feeling sick, try to eat and spend your time in a separate room from people you live with. If you usually share a bed or bedroom with someone, you will need to sleep in a separate room.

Self isolating

What is “self isolating”?

You might have heard about something called “self isolating”. Self isolating is different from physical distancing. Self isolating means staying at home for two weeks (14 days), *as well as physical distancing* (keeping a distance of two metres from other people, even people you live with).

When to self isolate

Right now, **you do not need to self isolate** unless:

- You have just come back from overseas (in the last two weeks)
- You are a confirmed case of COVID-19, or you are being tested
- OR you have been close to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

If you are not sure about whether you should self-isolate, the best thing to do is call your usual healthcare provider and talk about it with them.

Don't be scared, be prepared

How can families and households support each other?

It's important to talk to everyone you live with now, including children, about what you will need to do to keep everyone safe and supported, and prevent catching COVID-19.

The two most important things your household can do are:

- Make a hibernation plan
- Build your bubble

Hibernation

What is hibernation?

You have probably heard that a lot of people are choosing to stay at home to make sure they do not catch COVID-19. **Hibernation** means setting yourself up to be safe, comfortable and healthy at home for a while and restricting how many people you see in person to reduce your risk of catching any viruses.

Hibernation is different from **self isolation**. At the moment, only people who have come back from overseas in the last two weeks, have been confirmed to have, or are being tested for, COVID-19, or have been in close contact with someone who is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 are required to **self isolate**.

However, for people who may be at a higher risk of getting sick, it is a good idea to think about planning for hibernation now.

How to make a plan for hibernation

What would you need to have at home?

To begin with, think about what you will need to keep you happy, healthy and safe if you have to stay at home for a while. Think about it the same way you might prepare for a holiday away, and make a list of things you need to have with you.

Consider essential things

- Food and drinks for you and the people you live with
- Supplies like nappies and formula if you have young children
- Food and supplies for your pets
- Personal care items
- Any medicine you need regularly or might need in an emergency
- Activities and ideas to keep you and the people you live with entertained at home
- Check your internet and phone plan to make sure you have enough data or minutes to stay in touch with people

While you want to have enough of these things for a short time, you do not need to over stock. The shops, supermarkets and pharmacies will continue to get more food and other supplies, so you can always buy more later.

Make a plan for how you will get what you need if you have to stay home:

- Most supermarkets will let you order online and deliver to your home
- If they are too busy, or don't have what you need, many local shops are offering to deliver too. Give them a call and see if that is possible
- You can call your doctor to renew prescriptions, and many pharmacies are offering to deliver your medicines to your home
- You may have friends, relatives or neighbours who can pick things up for you

Remember that if you are staying at home to avoid COVID-19 you should stay *two metres* away from anyone coming to your door. You may want to request that people leave things on your doorstep for you to collect when they leave.

You will need to restrict access to your home during your hibernation: anyone who is not part of your **bubble** and being as careful as you cannot come in.

Build your Bubble

Everyone has people in their lives that they see regularly or may depend on. Think about who lives in your home, and who is important in each person's life. This includes family and friends, and people who might visit for essential reasons like personal care or support workers. All the people you interact with regularly are part of your **bubble**.

If your household needs to stay at home and hibernate, it is important to think about keeping everyone in your bubble safe, healthy and in touch.

Who is in your bubble?

Talk to everyone in your household and make a list of the important people in their day or week. This list will include:

Who you live with

Make sure you are on the same page about what to do when you are at home together, or when someone goes out in public. Explain why it is important that everyone is very careful to be clean, wash their hands, and practice **physical distancing**.

Some things you will need to talk about:

- Washing hands
- Covering coughs and sneezes
- Cleaning and wiping surfaces regularly after you touch them

- When you need to spend time in different rooms
- Opening windows to air out your rooms
- Going outside to spend time without being too close to each other
- Not sharing beds or bedrooms with others who are sick, even with your partner
- Not sharing toothbrushes, toothpaste, cups or eating utensils

Let everyone know that if you get sick it could be serious, and you need them to be extra careful.

Make a plan for how you will support each other with cleanliness, physical distancing, keeping each other company and giving each other space. Working together as a team will make a big difference!

Essential visitors. Who do you need to see?

Some visitors are essential parts of your bubble. Think about who you need to see every day or week to keep people in your home healthy. This might include people like:

- Personal care workers
- Support workers
- Social workers
- Probation officers
- Doctors or nurses
- Cleaners

It's important to talk to these people now, or your agency, provider or NASC coordinator to make a plan about how they can continue to support your household if you need to stay at home. You may want to talk with them about their own bubbles and find out how they are keeping themselves protected and isolated from COVID-19. Tell them about your plan for protecting your bubble and ask if they would be willing to do the same things.

It may mean having different people than usual visit, as your regular people might need to hibernate too or take care of their own bubbles for a while. Talk about what might happen if no one is able to visit for a while, and how your household might be able to adapt for that time. Your support worker or agency might be able to be in contact over the phone or online to talk you through what you need to do, provide advice, or just have a chat. Work together to make a plan that works for you.

Friends, family and social connections. Who can you keep in touch with in different ways?

Some people are in your bubble because they are friends, family and social connections. While you are hibernating at home, it is important that you do not have close physical contact with anyone who is not being as careful as you.

You will need to restrict access to your home during your hibernation: anyone who is not part of your bubble cannot come in.

Talk to your family and friends now about your plan to protect your bubble, and discuss whether they might want to do the same things and build a whānau bubble with your household. This may not be practical for everyone, so if you need to stop seeing friends and family in person for a while make sure.

you talk about how you can keep in touch and keep each other company in different ways, like over the phone or online. It's really important that everyone in your house can keep in touch with people they care about while they are hibernating!

Make a longer term plan too

Right now the important thing is to be ready to hibernate, or stay at home, as soon as you need to. At the moment, most people are getting ready to stay at home. It's a good idea to make a plan now with the people in your bubble about what you will do if you need to stay at home for a longer time. Talk about what you will need, how you will get it, and how you will look after and keep each other company while you are all being careful in your bubbles!

More information

For more information about how to keep yourself and your whānau well, visit: www.health.govt.nz or www.covid19.govt.nz