

3 July 2020

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Re: OIA request – Protocols for patient support people during Alert Levels 1 and 2

Thank you for your Official Information Act request received 23 June seeking information from Waitematā District Health Board (DHB) about protocols for patient support people during Alert Levels 1 and 2 of the COVID-19 response.

Before responding to your specific questions, it may be useful to provide some context about our services.

Waitematā DHB serves a population of more than 630,000 across the North Shore, Waitakere and Rodney areas, the largest and one of the most rapidly growing DHBs in the country. We are the largest employer in the district, employing around 7,500 people across more than 80 locations.

In addition to providing services to our own population, we are also the metropolitan Auckland provider of forensic psychiatry, child disability services, child community dental services and community alcohol and drug services.

In response to your request, we are able to provide the following information:

I would like to do an OIA on the protocol the DHB had/have in relation to access for support people of patients in public hospitals within your DHB region during Level 2 Covid-19 response (14 May and 8 June) and Level 1.

ALERT LEVEL 1

Normal visiting and support person protocols are back in place with the addition of three simple rules:

- observe good hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette at all times
- do not visit patients, or attend appointments with patients, if unwell
- follow the contact tracing option that best suits them, e.g., using the NZ COVID Tracer app to scan QR codes using smartphones at our main entrances, or registering on arrival.

Visiting hours are generally from 8am to 8pm, with some exceptions. Please see full details at: www.waitemataadhb.govt.nz/patients-visitors/staying-in-hospital/visiting-hours/

Currently, anyone arriving from overseas with the intention of visiting patients in our care must first be in isolation from other people in New Zealand for a minimum period of 14 days, with a negative COVID-19 swab required prior to leaving the facility. Further details can be found at: www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus

Outpatients

Patients are welcome to bring a support person to appointments.

ALERT LEVEL 2

Please refer to the following attachments:

Attachment 1 - COVID-19 – Visitors Policy.

Attachment 2 - Compassionate Approach to Visitors of Probable or Confirmed COVID-19 Patient.

I trust that this information is helpful.

Waitematā DHB supports the open disclosure of information to assist community understanding of how we are delivering publicly funded healthcare. This includes the proactive publication of anonymised Official Information Act responses on our website from 10 working days after they have been released.

If you consider there are good reasons why this response should not be made publicly available, we will be happy to consider your views.

Yours sincerely



Tamzin Brott
COVID-19 Executive Lead
Waitematā District Health Board

COVID-19 – Visitors Policy

Content

1.	Purpose	1
2.	Definitions	1
3.	General Principles	1
4.	Visitor Restrictions	2
5.	Visitors for inpatients who are not COVID-19 positive	2
6.	Nominated visitors	3
7.	Support People for Radiology and Outpatient Appointments.....	3
8.	Protocol for Screening and Tracking of Visitors.....	3
9.	Precautions for visitors to observe	4
10.	Associated Documents.....	4

1. Purpose

These guidelines seek to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 whilst New Zealand is in Level-2 COVID-19 through limiting visitors to patients in our hospitals. This policy provides direction on access by the public to our DHB hospital campuses during this response in order to:

- support patients to remain connected with their whānau and loved-ones; and
- facilitate whānau as partners in patient care

These measures, as with all current COVID-19-related measures, seek to ensure the safety of patients and staff by minimising avoidable contact and the potential for spread.

2. Definitions

Visitor	A key support person over the age of 15
Carer	The person who will be most involved in supporting the patient at home and over the age of 15

3. General Principles

This policy outlines our visiting restrictions for inpatients who are **not** COVID-19 probable or confirmed. It ensures we stand by Waitematā DHB's core values. In particular, it:

- prioritises the safety of visitors, our patients and staff on site;
- recognises the importance of whānau as partners in patient care;
- seeks solutions that keep patients connected with whānau; and
- strives to provide staff and visitors with clear information and explanations that they can relate to their own circumstances.

There is the expectation that staff use clinical judgement including an assessment of patient status, situation, consistency, and clinical environment situation for all decisions regarding visiting.

Note: Visitors for patients with a probable or confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis please see the below policy: [COVID -19 Compassionate Approach to Visitors of Probable or Confirmed COVID-19 Patient](#)

Issued by	IMT Welfare and Safety Function Lead	Issued Date	20 May 2020 (Version 9)	Classification	COV-041
Authorised by	COVID-19 IMT Executive	Review Period	36mths	Page	Page 1 of 5

This information is correct at date of issue. Always check on Waitematā DHB Controlled Documents site that this is the most recent version.

COVID-19 – Visitors Policy

4. Visitor Restrictions

Special rules are in place for people wishing to visit Waitematā DHB facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. These rules are consistent with Government measures that are in place to restrict contact between people and reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading. Access points to facilities will continue to be minimised to allow health screening and visitor register processes to remain robust.

The rules also reflect the vulnerable nature of many of the individuals who access our services and are at high risk of the impacts of COVID-19. They consider the well-being of individual patients alongside the wellbeing and safety of the Waitematā DHB community and workforce as a whole.

We continue to monitor developments regarding COVID-19. Restrictions outlined in this policy will be regularly updated to reflect any changes in prevalence, risk and impact on hospital services.

When staff speak with patients and whānau we will inform them of the restricted visiting rules. Alternative means of keeping in touch via phone or zoom for virtual visiting are to still to be encouraged and enabled. Inpatient areas will continue best practice of keeping in contact with a key family member daily to update on a patient's care.

5. Visitors for inpatients who are not COVID-19 positive

On **Thursday 14 May 2020** New Zealand entered Level 2 restrictions. Effective **Tuesday 19 May 2020** inpatients at Waitematā DHB facilities, who are **not** COVID-19 probable or confirmed, will be able to have one visit per day. Usual visiting times of 8am - 8pm are adhered to, with the exception of birthing or labour. Consideration should be given to the length of the visit and as a guide it should not exceed 2 hours,

Visitors to high risk areas ED & ADU/ICU/SCBU/Ward 5/ and Older Adult (AT&R) wards will be restricted to a maximum of one nominated visitor and one visit per day.

SCBU: in the case of neonates, a mother and her baby are considered to be “the patient”. The visiting policy of one nominated visitors applies, however, please note that there should be flexibility to allow mothers to visit their baby in SCBU at any time day or night with one other nominated visitor at a time (partner or support person).

For all other areas visits will be restricted to two nominated visitors, however, patients can have just one visitor at a time and only one visit per day will be permitted.

Maternity: the 2 hour maximum visiting rule does not apply for a support person of a pregnant woman for labour and birth, including induction of birth.

Haematology Day Stay (NSH) and Medical Day Stay (WTH) will retain a **No visitor** policy. The exception is when a patient is visiting for the first time and undergoing education they may bring a support person as this education session is completed in the sole single room on the unit.

Mental Health inpatient units: KMU (ward 12) will support 2 nominated visitors, one per day, as above. He Puna Waiora, Waitarau and Mason Clinic have their own separate/ site specific policy and procedure:

[Visitors and Leave - AMHS Inpatient Units](#)

[Visitors - Regional Forensic Psychiatric Services - \(Mason Clinic\)](#)

The ward staff should use discretion in the management of visitor numbers and if they feel that safe distancing is at risk they should direct visitors to wait in an alternative area or visit at another time. For example, if the patient requires a procedure which increases the number of people around the bed space, or, if there are already other visitors in a 4 bed bay that could cause the area to become congested.

Issued by	IMT Welfare and Safety Function Lead	Issued Date	20 May 2020 (Version 9)	Classification	COV-041
Authorised by	COVID-19 IMT Executive	Review Period	36mths	Page	Page 2 of 5

This information is correct at date of issue. Always check on Waitematā DHB Controlled Documents site that this is the most recent version.

COVID-19 – Visitors Policy

Compassionate Grounds

Exemptions may be made on compassionate grounds at the discretion of the nurse in charge or clinical nurse managers to enable:

- More than one visitor at a time
- More than two nominated visitors
- Visits longer than 2 hours
- Visits outside standard visiting hours
- Visits for people under 15 years of age

The decision regarding visitation on compassionate grounds will be communicated to both the patient and visitor by a senior staff member as soon as possible. If there is a disagreement between staff members, the case will be referred, for an immediate, third party decision, to:

- Charge Nurse Manager, Clinical Charge Midwife or Clinical Nurse Director (during working hours)
- Waitematā Central Operations Manager or Executive Manager on call (after hours)

Overseas visitor process

Please see [Appendix 1](#) for the process for overseas family to visit on compassionate grounds.

6. Nominated visitors

A nominated visitor is a person who has been identified by a patient/parent/caregiver or guardian as their visitor. Nominated visitors need to be aged 15 years or over. There can only be two nominated visitors assigned to any inpatient at a given time and they must be from the same extended 'bubble'. Only one of the nominated visitors can visit each day, unless approval has been granted under compassionate grounds.

On admission (or during their stay) ward patients will be informed that they can nominate visitors from their 'extended bubble'. If the patient is unable to nominate visitors, then appropriate parents, carers, or guardians will do so.

The name and contact details of nominated visitors will be recorded for individual inpatients on a spreadsheet by the ward/unit clerk or other delegated person. This information will be held centrally and accessible to all screeners at all entrances. Visitor information can be pulled through on the screening tab, when you enter the patient name, thus allowing visitors to be checked at the entrance they use and ensure they are a nominated visitor.

This visitor register will assist with the screening, monitoring and contact tracing of visitors into Waitematā DHB facilities. Screening registers are currently paper-based and later added to a secure electronic system. However a review of electronic register options is in progress with a view to adopt a suitable option to replace the existing spreadsheet and paper systems.

7. Support People for Radiology and Outpatient Appointments

Patients coming to a Waitematā DHB facility for an outpatient appointment, or visiting Radiology, are able to bring a support person with them if required. Radiology and Outpatient teams should engage in a process to assist the patient to identify an appropriate support person if required.

8. Protocol for Screening and Tracking of Visitors

All nominated visitors to the hospital will undertake a health screening at point of entry, prior to being given access to the ward or service. A central register will be maintained at the entrance, documenting the visitor's name and phone number, the patient they are visiting, the ward visited and the health screening outcome. This screening will be repeated every time a visitor presents at a Waitematā DHB facility.

Issued by	IMT Welfare and Safety Function Lead	Issued Date	20 May 2020 (Version 9)	Classification	COV-041
Authorised by	COVID-19 IMT Executive	Review Period	36mths	Page	Page 3 of 5

This information is correct at date of issue. Always check on Waitematā DHB Controlled Documents site that this is the most recent version.

COVID-19 – Visitors Policy

Security guards will greet visitors on arrival and communicate the visitor policy.

Health screening will be carried out by nursing or HCA staff located at entrances to facilities.

Screening will consist of the following questions:

- Have you had any overseas travel within the last 14 days?
- Have you had any known COVID-19 contact within the last 14 days?
- Do you have any of the following symptoms:
 - Sore throat
 - New cough
 - Fevers/high temperature
 - Runny nose

If a visitor passes the health screening they will be given access to the facility and provided guidance on visiting restrictions and protocol. They will be reminded of the importance of hand hygiene when entering and exiting patient care areas and making contact with the environment.

Visitors will only be allowed to visit the patient in their immediate area and not permitted to visit in other areas around the hospital.

Outpatients will be issued with a dated white wrist band which identifies them as having been screened before entering outpatient area.

Ward/unit visitors or support persons accompanying an Outpatients' appointment will be issued with a dated white visitor sticker.

If a visitor does not pass the health screening, the nurse/HCA will provide appropriate health advice and information and explain why they are not able to visit a patient.

We recognise that some patients who are in hospital for extended periods of time often require food and other amenities that are routinely provided by Whānau and friends. We will allow this to continue, however the nominated visitors must be the persons bringing in the food and other amenities.

9. Precautions for visitors to observe

While on site, visitors will be required to:

- ensure that they carry out appropriate hand hygiene measures;
- maintain safe distancing from staff and other patients;
- only visit the patient they have been nominated for;
- only visit the ward/area they are nominated for (no other areas of facility)
- be aware of the posters and signage throughout the campuses advising of above

They may visit cafeteria facilities if necessary where there will be limited beverage and food options, and registers will be required to be completed at all cafeteria facilities.

10. Associated Documents

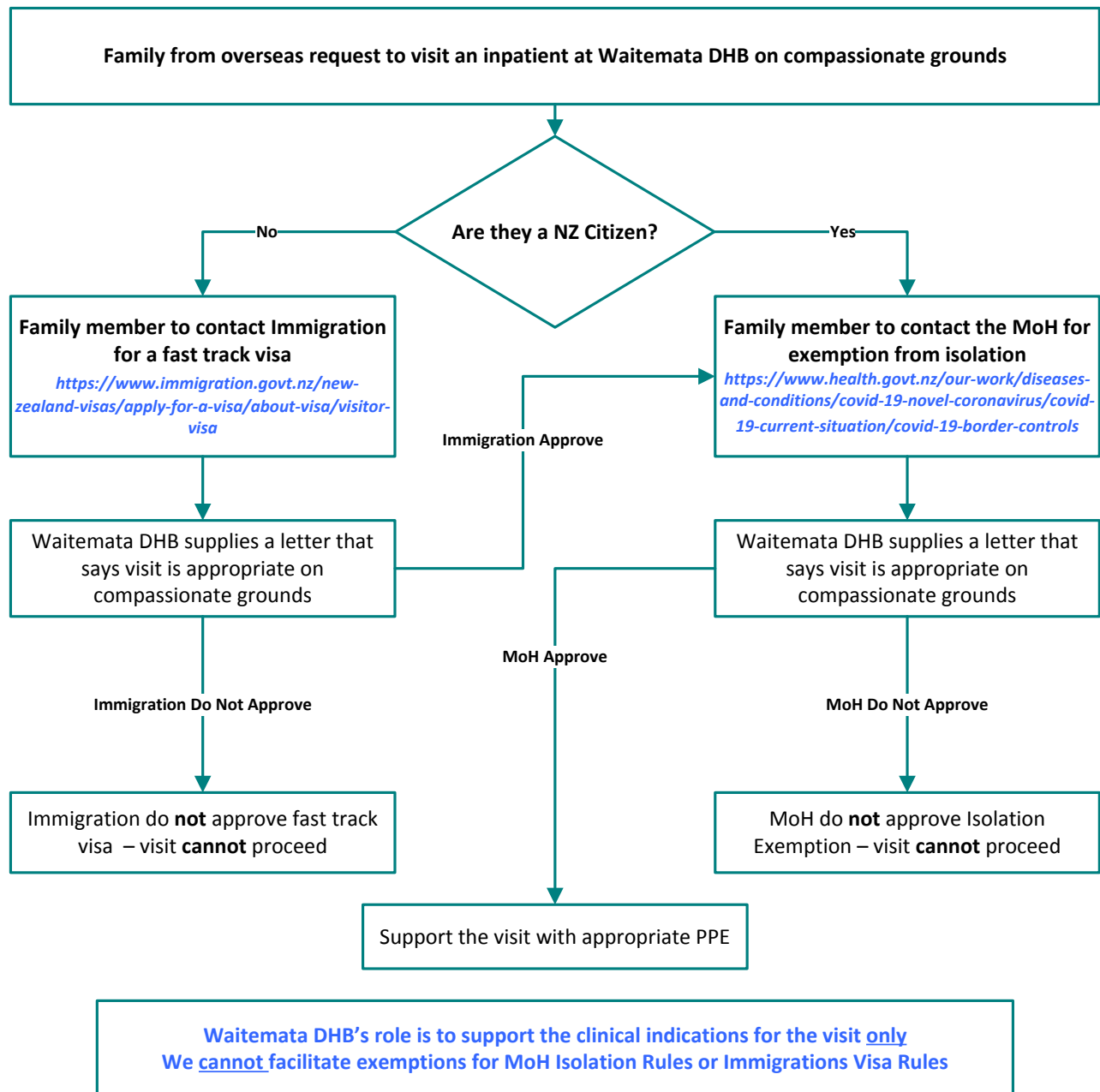
[COVID -19 Compassionate Approach to Visitors of Probable or Confirmed COVID-19 Patient](#)

Issued by	IMT Welfare and Safety Function Lead	Issued Date	20 May 2020 (Version 9)	Classification	COV-041
Authorised by	COVID-19 IMT Executive	Review Period	36mths	Page	Page 4 of 5

This information is correct at date of issue. Always check on Waitematā DHB Controlled Documents site that this is the most recent version.

COVID-19 – Visitors Policy

11. Appendix 1



Issued by	IMT Welfare and Safety Function Lead	Issued Date	20 May 2020 (Version 9)	Classification	COV-041
Authorised by	COVID-19 IMT Executive	Review Period	36mths	Page	Page 5 of 5

This information is correct at date of issue. Always check on Waitematā DHB Controlled Documents site that this is the most recent version.

Compassionate Approach to Visitors of Probable or Confirmed COVID-19 Patient

Contents

1.	Purpose	1
2.	Compassionate Reasons	1
3.	Waitematā DHB Responsibilities.....	1
4.	Identifying the Visitor.....	1
5.	Visitor Expectations.....	1
6.	Visiting Protocol	2
7.	Visitor Classification	2
8.	Appendix 1 – Consent for Compassionate Visiting	3
9.	Appendix 2 – Information for Casual Contacts	4

1. Purpose

To provide a compassionate approach to patients who are deemed probable or confirmed COVID-19. It aligns with Waitematā DHB values by supporting our patients and whānau through this challenging time.

2. Compassionate Reasons

End of life.

3. Waitematā DHB Responsibilities

- To manage compassionate visits on a case by case basis, and ensure only one visitor will be supported under these circumstances
- To ensure a risk assessment is completed and the visitor is advised of the risks before a visit takes place
- To keep a register of all persons granted visiting access through compassionate reasons
- To advise Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) of the visit (include ARPHS Emergency Ops email in the communication)
- To notify ARPHS if there are any PPE breaches which would change the categorisation/risk profile of the visitor
- To inform the visitor of the “casual contact” process and supply appropriate information

4. Identifying the Visitor

Need for visitor on compassionate grounds will be assessed and arrangements facilitated by the Charge Nurse Manager who will make contact with the identified family member.

5. Visitor Expectations

- Limit to one visitor only; this must be the same visitor (cannot alternate)
- Cannot be COVID-19 – confirmed/suspected/probable
- Asymptomatic
- Visitors to agree that they do not visit other areas in hospital

Issued by	IMT Welfare & Safety Function Lead	Issued Date	20 May 2020 (Version 3)	Classification	COV-040
Authorised by	COVID-19 IMT	Review	36 mths	Page	Page 1 of 5

This information is correct at date of issue. Always check on Waitematā DHB Controlled Documents site that this is the most recent version.

Compassionate Approach to Visitors of Probable or Confirmed COVID-19 Patient

6. Visiting Protocol

Screening/Risk Assessment

Charge Nurse Manager contacts the visitor via telephone and completes health screen to ensure the visitor is not COVID-19 confirmed or probable by asking the following questions:

- Are you a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19?
- Are you in self isolation due to recent overseas travel?
- Have you been living or working with the person you are visiting in hospital in the last 2 weeks?
- Have you been in contact with any other COVID-19 cases?
- Do you have any acute respiratory symptoms?

Charge Nurse Manager calls the COVID Infectious Diseases (ID) physician and requests that they complete a risk assessment. If after hours then contact the on-call ID physician. The ID physician calls the visitor to screen they are not immunocompromised and discuss associated health risks. ID physician and Charge Nurse Manager will check with each other before granting a visit to ensure all risks have been thoroughly considered.

Greet

Visitor is met at front of hospital by Duty Manager/nominated ward representative and escorted to the ward.

Visitor Supervision

A ward staff member is assigned as the visitor's "buddy" to support the visit and assist with PPE.

Consent

Waitematā DHB ward medical representative obtains informed consent from the visitor to proceed with the visit, as detailed in the "[Consent for Compassionate Visit](#)" (see [Appendix 1](#)). Information provided to the visitor in order for them to give their consent will include the risk of acquiring COVID-19 disease, and the consequences of transmission, including severe disease and death. The presence of any comorbidity will be elicited and the impact of these on the risk of transmission and severe disease will be clearly explained to the visitor, with expert guidance from the ID service. ARPHS "[Information for casual contacts](#)" leaflet (see [Appendix 2](#)) is provided to the visitor.

Documentation

Visitor signs the consent form and the medical representative documents in clinical notes that consent and risk assessment have been completed.

PPE Requirements

Buddy provides training and education to the visitor on the use of PPE:

- Visitor is provided with PPE for droplet and contact precautions (eye wear, surgical mask, gown and gloves)
Please note: If aerosol procedure taking place N95 mask to be worn instead of surgical mask
- Buddy assists the visitor with donning of PPE
- Visiting time is not limited (visitor may re-enter room with new PPE supervised by buddy visiting time if necessary)
- Buddy assists visitor to doff PPE before leaving the patient's immediate environment
- Buddy documents that appropriate PPE was worn and donning and doffing process was followed by the visitor

Visitor Departure

Visitor is escorted off the ward and taken to the hospital entrance.

7. Visitor Classification

Due to use of PPE and training/supervision provided - visitor classified as casual contact only.

Issued by	IMT Welfare & Safety Function Lead	Issued Date	20 May 2020 (Version 3)	Classification	COV-040
Authorised by	COVID-19 IMT	Review	36 mths	Page	Page 2 of 5

This information is correct at date of issue. Always check on Waitematā DHB Controlled Documents site that this is the most recent version.

Compassionate Approach to Visitors of Probable or Confirmed COVID-19 Patient

8. Appendix 1 – Consent for Compassionate Visiting



Consent for Compassionate Visiting

Patient Sticker

Date: _____ Time: _____

I, _____ (name of visitor)

have discussed with _____ (name of Doctor)

_____ (designation of Doctor)

the possible risks involved with visiting my family member with Covid-19.

I agree that:

- I have had a discussion with the Doctor looking after my family member or Infectious Disease Doctor regarding the risks involved with visiting.
- I have been able to ask questions and I have received all the information that I require.
- I understand the risks involved with visiting my family member.
- I understand that I will have assistance to put on and remove the required personal protection equipment (PPE) to ensure I am wearing and removing it properly.
- I understand that a nurse will be present in the room during the visit to ensure appropriate use of personal protection equipment (PPE).
- I understand that I will receive guidance on washing my clothes and showering/bathing on return home from the visit to my family member.
- I understand that I will be identified as a "casual contact" by Auckland Regional Public Health service (ARPHS), I have been provided with the appropriate leaflet that informs me of the actions I need to take.

Visitors Name: _____

Visitors Signature: _____

Relationship to Patient: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Issued by	IMT Welfare & Safety Function Lead	Issued Date	20 May 2020 (Version 3)	Classification	COV-040
Authorised by	COVID-19 IMT	Review	36 mths	Page	Page 3 of 5

Compassionate Approach to Visitors of Probable or Confirmed COVID-19 Patient

9. Appendix 2 – Information for Casual Contacts



You may have had limited contact with someone who has been diagnosed with novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

What you need to know

You are considered a casual contact as you have been within two metres of someone with COVID-19 for less than 15 minutes OR in the same space as the infected person for longer than 15 minutes, but more than two metres away.

You are unlikely to get infected just from having been in the same place as the person with the virus. You are considered to be at low risk of catching the virus.

The people most at risk of catching COVID-19 are close contacts of the infected person. An example of a close contact is someone who lives in the same household as an infected person, or someone who has been within two metres of an infected person for 15 minutes or more.

While you are not considered a close contact, there is a small possibility you may become unwell. In most cases COVID-19 causes mild to moderate symptoms. However, some people do develop pneumonia and severe respiratory illness.

What you need to do

1. Monitor your health closely until 14 days after you were last exposed to the infectious person. Watch for these symptoms:

- Fever, chills or sweats
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Sore throat
- Loss of smell
- Signs of a head cold (runny nose, sneezing, post-nasal drip)



Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Information for casual contacts
Current as at: 07/04/2020

Issued by	IMT Welfare & Safety Function Lead	Issued Date	20 May 2020 (Version 3)	Classification	COV-040
Authorised by	COVID-19 IMT	Review	36 mths	Page	Page 4 of 5

This information is correct at date of issue. Always check on Waitematā DHB Controlled Documents site that this is the most recent version.

Compassionate Approach to Visitors of Probable or Confirmed COVID-19 Patient



2. If you develop symptoms or become unwell, seek medical help, but phone first.

Tell them you are a contact of someone who has COVID-19. You can also free phone Healthline on 0800 358 5453, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Interpreters are available.

Call an ambulance on 111 if you have difficulty breathing. Tell the phone operator that you have been in contact with someone with COVID-19.

Self-isolate yourself at home. Please keep yourself apart from other people in your household as much as possible, e.g. stay in a separate room and use a separate bathroom if available. Use a face mask if you have one (if the mask gets damp or dirty with secretions, it must be changed immediately and should not be reused. Put it in the bin, being careful not to touch the front of the mask). Information on self-isolation is available on-line at [covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz).

3. Practise good hygiene to protect others

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or you can cough or sneeze into your bent elbow. Throw used tissues into a lined rubbish bin, and immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, making sure you dry them thoroughly. You can also use a hand sanitiser if there is no soap and water available.

Through the day, wash and dry your hands often and thoroughly. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Clean high-touch surfaces like kitchen benches and door handles regularly.

For more information

Visit [covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz)



Issued by	IMT Welfare & Safety Function Lead	Issued Date	20 May 2020 (Version 3)	Classification	COV-040
Authorised by	COVID-19 IMT	Review	36 mths	Page	Page 5 of 5