Welfare

Getting the help and support you need

Everything you need to know in one place

Learn the simple steps you can take to unite against the virus and slow its spread, see what help is available and get the latest advice and updates at **covid19.govt.nz**

Got symptoms or have health questions?

Call your GP before you visit. Or call Healthline on **0800 358 5453**.

Not sure who to talk to?

If you're not sure what assistance may be available, or you don't know who to contact for help, phone the Government Helpline on **0800 779 997** (8am – 1am, 7 days a week).

Health and wellbeing

It's normal to feel distressed and to experience symptoms of stress related to COVID-19, especially if you or your friends and family have possibly been exposed to the virus. We are in uncertain and unprecedented times, and everyone will respond differently.

Mental health

Right now many people are feeling worried, anxious or scared. So as well as looking after our physical health we also need look after our mental health.

Keeping connected

We're all in this together, and while we might not be able to be physically in touch right now, it's important to stay connected in other ways.

New Zealand is known for its manaakitanga and now more than ever we need to remember the power of kindness and uniting together.

New Zealand Government

Unite against COVID-19

Top ways to look after your mental wellbeing

While there are things that we can't control at the moment, there are things you can do to boost your mental wellbeing and that of your loved ones:

1. **Stay connected**

This is important for our wellbeing, and helps to make us feel safer, less stressed and less anxious. We can support each other to get through this. While we are limiting social contact to contain the spread of COVID-19, there are still lots of ways we can connect.

2. **Acknowledge your feelings**

It's completely normal to feel overwhelmed, stressed, anxious, worried or scared in the current situation. Allow yourself time to notice and express what you're feeling. This could be by writing thoughts and feelings down in a journal, talking to others, doing something creative or practising meditation. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you're feeling. Reach out to others.

3. **Stick to routines where possible**

Try to go to sleep and wake up at the same time, eat at regular times, shower, change your clothes, have regular e-meetings with colleagues or virtual coffee dates with friends and do your chores. Meditating and exercising can help you to relax and have a positive impact on your thoughts. Try not to increase unhealthy habits like comfort eating, drinking or smoking.

4. **Check-in on other people who might need help**

Reaching out to those who may be feeling alone or concerned can benefit both you and the person receiving support.

5. **Seek accurate information from legitimate sources**

You may find it useful to limit your media intake. Get the facts from **covid19.govt.nz** to help distinguish facts from rumours. Seek information updates at specific times once or twice a day.

6. **Don't be afraid to seek further professional support**

For support with anxiety, distress or mental wellbeing, you can call or text **1737** to talk with a trained counsellor for free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

7. **Continue existing mental health treatment if possible**

Notice if your symptoms are getting worse. Talk to your GP, counsellor, case worker or mental health team about how they can continue supporting you. Can your appointments take place over the phone, via email, text or video chat? What tips do they have to help you get through? Who can you call if you need help urgently?

Find the latest health information

The Ministry of Health updates their webpage regularly. Get more detailed health advice at **health.govt.nz/coronavirus**

Are you or your whānau unwell?

The best ways to get support are to:

- **call your family doctor** for advice or information. If you think you've been exposed to COVID-19 (through contact with someone who has it), it's important to let your family doctor know
- **call Healthline** with your COVID-19 health-related concerns. The call is free and someone is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on **0800 358 5453** (or for international SIMs call **+64 9 358 5453**)
- you can also call Healthline:
  - if you don't have a family doctor
  - if you're feeling unwell but you're not sure if you need to see a doctor
  - for advice about what's happening for you and next steps.
- call Plunketline if you have questions about your child or baby's health or wellbeing on **0800 933 922** and speak to a Plunket nurse. Plunketline runs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- contact your midwife for support and advice during pregnancy and postnatal.

In an emergency, always call 111

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Financial support

If you've lost your job or can't work at the moment you may be able to get a benefit or some other financial help. And whether you're working or not, if you're struggling to meet your living costs or get an unexpected bill, you may be able to get assistance. Even if you don't think you qualify, call Work and Income to talk about your situation on **0800 559 009**.

There is help available for urgent costs like:

- food
- accommodation costs (rent, mortgage, board)
- temporary accommodation costs if you are staying in tourist accommodation, motels, hotels or a rental
- power, gas and water bills or heating
- repairs or replacing appliances
- medical and dental costs
- bedding.

You can find more information about financial support (including eligibility criteria) on the Work and Income website at **workandincome.govt.nz** under 'benefits and payments'.

Employer Wage Subsidy and Leave Payments

The wage subsidy is to help you keep your business going if you face laying off staff or reducing their hours because of COVID-19. If you're an employer, contractor, sole trader or are self-employed you may qualify. The leave payment is available when people need to self-isolate or are sick with COVID-19.

If you have any questions about these payments, call the Employer Subsidy and Leave Payments Line on **0800 40 80 40**.

Loss of income

Work and Income may be able to help if you have lost wages because of COVID-19. For example, if:

- you can't work because you're sick or your workplace is closed
- you have to stay home and look after family members.

Other help from Work and Income

Work and Income also provides other help such as benefits and housing assistance. Everyone's situation is different, so what you qualify for will depend on your situation.

Contacting Work and Income

Contact Work and Income if you:

- would like assistance
- aren't sure if you can get assistance
- are struggling to support yourself or your family
- would like more information.

Visit **workandincome.govt.nz** or phone **0800 559 009**.

Work and Income may be able to help you over the phone without you coming into an office.

If you do need to come in, Work and Income will make an appointment and tell you what to bring.

Accommodation

Accommodation support for self-isolation

If you are required to self-isolate due to COVID-19, you can stay in your own home or shared accommodation. Take simple, common-sense steps to avoid close contact with people.

If you need help with accommodation to self-isolate, including if you're returning to New Zealand from overseas, contact the Temporary Accommodation Service at the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). MBIE is working with other government agencies to assist those affected in finding suitable temporary accommodation.

Temporary accommodation is not income or asset-tested. There will be a cost for temporary accommodation, but if you ordinarily reside in New Zealand, you can contact the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) to see if assistance is available to meet this cost.

To register your details, please call the MBIE Temporary Accommodation Service on **0508 754 163**.

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After registering, you will be contacted by a staff member who will assess your needs and work with you to help you find suitable temporary self-isolation accommodation.

If you do not normally reside in New Zealand, please contact your embassy or consulate for further assistance.

Tenancy information

If you are the tenant or landlord of a rental property, you can find information on your rights and obligations at **tenancy.govt.nz** or by phoning **0800 TENANCY** (**0800 836 262**).

Schools and early childhood

The Ministry of Education is working with all schools and early childhood centres and is providing resources and additional support.

We know that maintaining routines is important and children look to both their parents and teachers for this support. It's natural for children to want to be at school to play and learn with their peers so where possible schools will operate as usual. For updated information about possible closures check with your school or early childhood centre.

Some children may be feeling worried about COVID-19 and being at school will give them further opportunities to understand what's happening and who is helping. If you want to talk to your children about COVID-19 Save the Children have developed a site with support information at **savethechildren.org.nz**

Keeping children safe

If you're worried that a child or young person you know is not safe or being cared for, or you know a child who has been separated from their parents or caregivers, you can phone Oranga Tamariki on 0508 326 459 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or email **contact@ot.govt.nz**

Animal welfare

If you're concerned about an animal's welfare phone the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) on **0800 008 333**

Veterinary services

If your animals need treatment, contact your own veterinary clinic. If you do not have a regular veterinarian or yours is not open, you can find nearby clinics by going to Find-a-Vet. NZ Veterinary Association has COVID-19 information at **nzva.org.nz** including how to manage animals when in self-isolation.

If you are self-isolating, you MUST contact your veterinarian BEFORE visiting them or they visit you (including for production animals). This applies even if your animal is being presented by someone else.

Information for international visitors

If you need help with your travel bookings, contact your nearest i-SITE or your travel provider. For the latest local travel conditions and for rearranging travel arrangements, contact one of the 80 i-SITEs throughout New Zealand. Visit **i-SITE.org** for a full list.

If your visa is about to expire, phone Immigration New Zealand on **0508 558 855** or visit **immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas**

If you are a foreign national travelling in New Zealand requiring further consular assistance, contact your nearest Embassy or High Commission first. Contact details are available on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade website **mfat.govt.nz**

For updates and more information on keeping yourself safe, visit **Covid19.govt.nz**

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