

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Q&As

Hawke's Bay Response (Update as of 19 March, 2020)

Hawke's Bay District Health Board has activated its full-scale emergency response structure in preparation and response to the COVID-19 pandemic and is well prepared and advanced in its pandemic response.

The DHB has been working closely with pharmacies, general practice and aged residential care facilities for some weeks to help ensure they have the training and equipment in place if a community outbreak of COVID-19 occurs.

An isolation ward at Hawke's Bay Hospital is ready to activate if required and the hospital also has six negative pressure isolation rooms, including in the Emergency Department and Intensive Care Unit.

Our communities across the region will start to see widespread consistent advice provided by the Ministry of Health and Hawke's Bay DHB around helping to stop the spread of viruses and flu, as well as specific COVID-19 information. You will start to see posters and advice displayed in shops and trade windows and in public facilities such as libraries and other high-pedestrian traffic areas.

Please respect this advice and help to keep our community safe by staying at home if you are feeling unwell.

Community-Based Assessment Centres (CBACs)

These are not drop-in centres. People will be turned away if they just turn-up. People must be referred to a CBAC by their GP or Healthline.

Over the coming days, Community-Based Assessment Centres (CBACs) will be opening in Hawke's Bay to assess and manage people who may be suspected COVID-19 cases.

The first assessment centre is opening on Thursday 19 March at the old Hastings Health Centre building, 101 Queen Street East, Hastings.

*Note: Future centres will be advertised on [ourhealthhb.nz](https://www.ourhealthhb.nz) and the **Hawke's Bay DHB** Facebook page.*

What to do

If you believe you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, please **phone ahead to your GP or Healthline 0800 358 5453 as normal**. You will be triaged over the telephone. If they believe you need to be assessed for COVID-19, you **will be referred** to the Community-Based Assessment Centre.

Please note: Your GP or Healthline will then phone the CBAC ahead, to let staff know that you are being referred. The team at the CBAC will call you and make an appointment to see you.

Most people will be assessed in their cars, so please stay in your car on arrival. Only those that require more clinical assessment will be escorted safely into the centre.

Do not be alarmed to find staff working at the community-based assessment centres wearing personal protective equipment (PPE). This helps to keep them protected from any spread of infection as they will be in close proximity to patients being assessed for COVID-19.

What if a CBAC is not open where I live yet?

If a CBAC is not yet open near you, and you're experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, then we advise you to **stay home and call ahead** to your GP or call Healthline as normal. **DO NOT turn up at your GP or emergency department** as you may put others at risk of infection. Staff will talk to you about how you can be seen and assessed safely.



What is the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronaviruses are a large diverse family of viruses that cause illnesses such as the common cold. In January 2020 a new coronavirus was identified, now called COVID-19. As this is a new virus, there is no vaccine for COVID-19 currently available.

Are there cases in New Zealand?

Yes, there are confirmed cases in New Zealand. However, as at 19 March 2020, there were no reported cases in Hawke's Bay.

Daily updates are being provided by Hawke's Bay DHB and these can be found on www.ourhealthhb.nz

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms are similar to the flu – fever, cough and shortness of breath. If you have these symptoms and have recently travelled or been in close contact with someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19 please contact the special Healthline number 0800 358 5453 or call your GP.

What is the incubation period of COVID-19?

We don't yet know how long symptoms take to show after a person has been infected, but current World Health Organization assessments suggest that it is 2–10 days.

How it spreads

COVID-19, like the flu, can be spread from person to person. When a person who has COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or talks, they may spread droplets containing the virus. This is why social distancing is important. Maintain at least 2 metres distance between yourself and others. You may get infected by the virus if you touch surfaces or objects and they have been touched by someone who is infected and then you touch your mouth, nose or eyes. That's why it's really important to use good hygiene: regularly wash and thoroughly dry your hands and use good cough etiquette.

How serious is COVID-19?

Most people have mild to moderate illness with flu-like symptoms. People of all ages are being infected, but older people and those with medical conditions seem most likely to get seriously ill.

I have mild flu symptoms; what should I do?

Most people with symptoms will not have COVID-19. It is more likely that they will have a heavy cold or seasonal 'flu'. **Please stay at home until you have been symptom-free for 48 hours.**

However, if you think you might have COVID-19, current advice is to please stay at home and call ahead to your GP or call the dedicated COVID-19 Healthline number on **0800 358 5453**. This is to ensure arrangements can be made for you to be seen and swabbed in a safe setting, away from others to protect the wider community from the spread of infection.

Help stop the spread of viruses and flu by:

- Washing your hands with soap and water often (for at least 20 seconds).
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or by covering your mouth and nose with tissues.
- Put used tissues in the bin or a bag immediately.
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.
- Avoid personal contact, such as kissing, sharing cups or food with sick people.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs.

IMPORTANT NATIONAL ADVICE:

The government is continually updating its COVID-19 advice on this developing situation.

For the most up-to-date and comprehensive advice please visit the following NZ government website which has all public information related to COVID-19 covid19.govt.nz

