

24 November 2021

Have a household plan ready as Auckland opens up

With COVID-19 circulating widely in the community, Waitematā DHB is encouraging families to have a plan in place to help them get through in the event that a member of their whānau bubble becomes infected.

“It is important that people don’t wait for COVID-19 to enter their home before they start thinking about what that would mean and how they would need to respond,” said Tamzin Brott COVID-19 Executive Lead.

Although a full range of health and other support services are available to assist people who need to isolate at home, Brott said it was important for people to think ahead and plan for what they would do if they found themselves in this situation.

“With hundreds of new cases in Auckland each week, it is likely we will all come into contact with COVID at some point in the near future. The best thing we can all do to protect ourselves is to get vaccinated. This reduces the risk of infection and significantly reduces the risk of becoming seriously unwell – but it is not a guarantee that you won’t catch the virus.

“We all need to think about what provisions and support we would need in place if someone in our household returned a positive COVID-19 test and needs to self-isolate.”

Metro Auckland DHBs are currently rolling out a ‘care in the community’ initiative to assist those people who test positive but are not so unwell that they require hospitalisation as the city transitions from COVID-19 pandemic to endemic.

This is aimed at providing safe care in people’s homes, where appropriate, with wrap-around support services from a range of providers.

The DHB is encouraging people in the Waitematā district to consider the needs of their whānau if they were to test COVID-positive, including not just healthcare needs but also daily living necessities.

Considerations include:

- Where will you isolate? Can you stay at home and isolate safely away from others? Is there a separate bedroom where you can recover without sharing an immediate space with others?
- Who would be available to support your whānau, including managing the needs of young children and cooking meals?
- Do you live with household members who may be at increased risk of complications from COVID-19 infection (e.g. people over the age of 65, young children, pregnant women, people

who are immunocompromised or who have chronic heart, lung, or kidney conditions) and what do you need to do to help keep them safe?

- Who do you need to let know that you and or your family are self-isolating? Have a list of key contacts ready and check in with your support person daily.
- Can you work from home? If not, how will you support your family through this time? Think about how you would get access to food and other necessities.
- Have a first aid kit handy with gloves and masks for the household, with extra pain relief and drink plenty of water to help with minor symptoms – such as a cough, headache or mild temperature.
- If your symptoms change or worsen, or include feelings of breathlessness, nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea, seek medical advice from a doctor or Healthline (0800 358 5453, for COVID-19 health advice).
- Call 111 if you feel very unwell.

“Have a plan and make sure everyone who needs to know is aware of what would happen,” Brott said.

“This can reduce a little bit of stress in the event of a positive swab result by ensuring the people directly affected know what they need to do and who is able to help.

“Initiate conversations now with family members, neighbours and friends – agree a plan to help each other if you need it – you’ll be glad you planned ahead if COVID-19 enters your home.”

The COVID-19 environment is constantly changing and so, are the wrap-around services that provide care for patients and their families. These services are being continuously developed as the ‘care in the community’ model is expanded.

There are many community services available to help. The Student Volunteer Army offer a Click and Collect grocery service to pick-up and drop off groceries to those in isolation. Whakarongorau provides free public, virtual health, mental health and social services, Te Whānau o Waipareira, The Fono and the Asian Network Inc Community Health Service are among the organisations providing community health and wellbeing support across the Auckland and Northland region.

The Ministry of Health provide COVID-19 health advice for the public via their website:
<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

Ends.

For further information, contact:
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