

For immediate release
14 February 2021

Auckland health authorities boost testing in response to new cases

Health authorities in Auckland are asking residents to be vigilant and follow public health advice following the three new positive cases of COVID-19 in the city, which has led to a short term return to Alert Level 3. Health authorities are also advising people in Auckland to remain calm.

Northern Region Health Coordination Centre Lead (and Counties Manukau Health CEO) Margie Apa said the health sector in Auckland is well prepared to respond to the new community cases but asks people to prepare to be patient if they are aiming to be tested tomorrow.

“We have successfully responded to outbreaks like this before in Tāmaki Makarau. Together we can do it again.”

All health services are regarded as essential and will continue as usual with an additional focus on infection prevention control measures and physical distancing of patients. The city’s hospitals and aged residential care facilities are updating their visitor policies and other protocols to protect the most vulnerable.

“Our hospitals will continue with planned care including clinics and surgery and we ask patients to please keep their appointments unless they are advised otherwise by their specialist or by public health,” Ms Apa said.

“If you are unwell with the symptoms of COVID-19 please call your contact at the hospital or clinic before coming to an appointment. They will tell you what to do.

“The new cases are a concern, but we expected to see further community cases in Auckland at some point in this pandemic, and we are well prepared.

“We are working closely with the Ministry of Health and other agencies to ensure everything possible is done to contain the spread of COVID-19 in our communities.

“Our message to people living in Auckland is to continue to be vigilant. The best defense against COVID-19 is to follow the same actions we’ve taken throughout the pandemic. Maintain good hand hygiene. Stay home if you are sick. Keep track of your movements to help us with contact tracing. Maintain physical distancing.

“If you have any symptoms, please get a free test at your local doctor, Urgent Care Clinic, or at one of our Community Testing Centres. If you are unsure, call your local doctor or Healthline. We advise that you ring ahead if you are planning to see your practice.”

“The all-of-community response that has served us well throughout the pandemic remains more important than ever and we thank everyone for continuing to do their part.”

Capacity at Auckland’s six Community Testing Centres has been boosted from tomorrow, with additional staff and longer hours. Traffic management is already in place at two of the testing sites, and people should expect longer waits than usual and be patient.

General Practices and Urgent Care Clinics are also prepared for a higher volume of testing. Mobile testing units are on standby to be deployed rapidly to locations throughout the city as directed by public health.

If you have any concerns please contact Healthline or your GP for advice on getting a free test.

To find testing locations in metro Auckland, visit www.arphs.health.nz/covid19test. For up-to-date information on all testing locations, please call Healthline (0800 358 5453) or visit www.healthpoint.co.nz/covid-19/

- Ends -

Media contact

Therese Sutherland – 021 525 185

Northern Regional Health Coordination Centre (NRHCC)

Notes for editors

The Northland and metro Auckland DHBs (Counties Manukau, Waitematā and Auckland DHBs) are operating a regional response to the COVID-19 pandemic through the Northern Region Health Coordination Centre (NRHCC).