

Media Release
13 September 2021

Thank you Tāmaki Makaurau for your mahi; let's keep up the testing to get down the Alert Levels

Tāmaki Makaurau health authorities are urging more Aucklanders to get a COVID-19 test to help the region move down Alert Levels and reconnect with the rest of Aotearoa.

Northern Region Health Coordination Centre lead (and Counties Manukau Health Chief Executive) Fepulea'i Margie Apa says Aucklanders have already made an extraordinary effort to go out and get swabbed.

"Once again, Aucklanders have heeded the call to get tested in record numbers during this outbreak with more than 270,000 people tested for COVID-19 since the start of the outbreak. This equates to 16% of the Auckland population.

"I want to give a heartfelt thank you to everyone in Tāmaki Makaurau for this incredible effort and for playing a vital role in our national effort to stamp it out.

"The hard work isn't done yet. We need more people to get a free COVID-19 test to protect yourself and your whānau and to ensure we have no undetected community spread. We are seeing COVID-19 positive cases in tamariki so if you're coming out for a COVID-19 test, please bring the whānau too.

"We have continued to see a small number of unlinked positives cases – these are cases where the person has not visited known locations of interest, has not already been identified as a contact of a positive case, and they have not always had typical or obvious COVID-19 symptoms.

"We want to cast a wide geographical net around the location of known clusters and unlinked cases so we particularly want to see more families and household bubbles from seven Auckland suburbs of interest come out to get tested."

The suburbs are:

- Mt Eden
- Massey
- Māngere
- Favona
- Papatoetoe
- Ōtara
- Manurewa

Anyone in Tāmaki Makaurau with any symptoms of COVID-19 should get a test – even those with very mild symptoms or who feel just slightly under the weather. Symptoms include:

- fever
- new or worsening cough
- sore throat
- shortness of breath

- sneezing and runny nose
- temporary loss of smell or altered sense of taste

Aucklanders should also call Healthline or their GP for advice on getting a test if they have any other less common symptoms. These include diarrhoea, headache, muscle aches, nausea, vomiting, malaise (a general feeling of discomfort, illness or unease), chest pain, abdominal pain, joint pain or confusion/irritability.

Anyone without symptoms from the suburbs of interest is also encouraged to be tested to help us have a level of assurance. People who don't have symptoms and get a one-off COVID-19 test for surveillance purposes don't need to isolate while they wait for the result.

Margie Apa adds, "Auckland is doing it tough - we all want to see the end of this outbreak and move down Alert Levels. You can help get us there by getting a COVID-19 test if you have any symptoms or if you live in a suburb of interest and get a one-off asymptomatic test."

COVID-19 testing locations increased, more than 400 testing staff trained

Health authorities have moved at pace over the last few weeks to increase testing options for people in our communities, with capacity boosted and extended opening hours at six community testing centres.

We have also opened pop-up testing sites to increase accessibility to testing in communities close to locations of interest and where there have been known community cases of COVID-19.

As at Monday 13 September, there are 22 community testing sites open across Auckland, spread from Warkworth in the North of the region to Pukekohe in the South. People can also access free testing at their GP or at a nearby designated GP practice (where you don't need to be enrolled to get a COVID-19 test) or urgent care clinic.

For up-to-date information on testing locations in Auckland, visit www.arphs.health.nz/covid19test. For up-to-date info on all testing locations, visit www.healthpoint.co.nz/covid-19/

To increase staffing levels at our community testing centres and across the testing network, more than 400 people have been trained in COVID-19 swabbing in the last three weeks. This is largely made up of healthcare students who came forward to take part in our testing response. We've also trained people from across our community and healthcare settings, including community workers, dental therapists and nurses.

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Media contact

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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).