

Kia ora tātou

Following on from request for advice on how to protect ourselves now that COVID-19 and in particular, the Delta variant is now amongst us in Te Taitokerau (4 confirmed cases), here is the detailed advice from Dr Gab Moss.

Please find below the typical course of a COVID illness.

Remembering that for 85% of cases the illness is likely to be mild and you will make a full recovery.

Those with underlying conditions such as asthma, COPD, diabetes, heart disease, previous stroke are likely to get sicker and need to go to hospital.

Your best protection from getting it in the first place is to **get double vaccinated**.

SO if we are talking about the potential scenarios where COVID positive patients are having to self-isolate at home I would advise families the following ;

Self-isolating means the same – whether you have COVID , or are considered to be a close contact of someone who has COVID (i.e. they are in your household) because it is assumed you have it too until you test negative.

The rules are

- Stay in your home, do not leave for any reason other than if advised to (i.e. for medical reasons)
- Have no physical contact with others in your home
- Do not share items with others (i.e. cutlery/linen)
- Maintain a 2 metre distance from other household members if you have to go into shared areas
- Do not share a bedroom or bed with other household members
- Strictly no visitors to your home
- If you need medical supplies/groceries- get someone else to collect them and drop them to your front door
- Minimise the time you spend in shared spaces (kitchen/bathroom)
- Make sure these spaces are well ventilated- ie leave windows open
- You can wipe down surfaces in shared areas and wear masks

You are likely to need the following supplies when you are sick with COVID

- Phone/device – so that medical teams can contact you daily for reviews
- Paracetamol – either liquid or tablets for fever /pain
- Plenty of fluids – in whatever form you like- water(best), milk, soup, dilute fruitjuice. Try to avoid sugary drinks/fizzy as this is likely to make diarrhoea worse and isn't good for you
- Imodium for diarrhoea
- Pulse oximeter – to measure the oxygen levels in your blood – you are likely to be given this and your Dr will ask you to report your levels when they contact you every day
- Your regular medications – important you keep taking these and have plenty of supplies . Check with your doctor as there are certain medications you may need to withhold or reduce when you are unwell

You do not need:

- Cough medicines/syrups – they don't work and they are expensive
- Multivitamins – unless you are prescribed these usually by your Dr, we should all get enough vitamins in our regular diet
- PPE gear/gloves – if you've already got COVID in your household, this won't make any difference. This stuff is for people who are dealing with unknown cases

Gabrielle

Timeline of COVID-19 Symptoms:

Early symptoms of COVID-19 vary widely. It can start with a tickle in your throat, a cough, fever, headache and feeling a bit 'chesty'.

Day 5-10 of COVID-19 are often the most worrisome time for respiratory (lung) complications, particularly for older patients and those with underlying conditions like high blood pressure, obesity or diabetes.

Days 1 – 3

- Sometimes it begins with a bout of diarrhoea
- Some people just feel tired and lose their sense of taste and smell
- Many people have several symptoms but no fever
- Some patients with gastrointestinal symptoms go on to develop respiratory symptoms,

Days 4 – 6

- Some patients never develop more than mild symptoms, or none at all
- Others begin to feel terrible, with an ever-present fever, aches, chills, cough and an inability to get comfortable
- Some younger patients with mild disease may develop rashes, including itchy red patches, swelling or blistering on the toes or fingers, similar to frostbite

Days 7 – 8

- For patients with mild illness, the worst is over after a week.
- Patients who have felt terrible may get worse. And some patients might start to feel better briefly then take a turn for the worse
- Patients with home oxygen monitors should monitor their oxygen levels at least 3 times per day and check in with a doctor if they start to feel more unwell.
- Monitoring should continue for the second week of illness. Patients may feel better sleeping on their stomachs or sides

Day 8 – 12

- Monitor for worsening symptoms including increasing shortness of breath, worsening cough
- If you have a home oxygen monitor continue to use it at least 3 times per day.

Days 13 – 14

- Patients who had mild illness should be well recovered
- Patients who had worse symptoms, but maintained normal oxygen levels, should feel mostly recovered after two weeks, although many patients report lingering fatigue
- Doctors advise a slow return to activity, even if you had mild or moderate illness
- Patients with severe symptoms and those who needed additional treatment because of low oxygen levels, may still feel unwell and fatigued and take far longer to recover .

* Information sourced from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/30/well/live/coronavirus-days-5-through-10.html>

Adapted from United against Covid-19 (covid19.govt.nz) and Sydney Local Health District RPA Virtual Hospital. Adapted from hfam.ca pathways with permission from Dee Mangin (McMaster University, University of Otago)