

WE ARE NOW AT ALERT LEVEL 2 as we unite against COVID-19. Our hospitals, doctors' surgeries and other health services are open. We are carefully expanding the services we can offer under Level 2, with safety measures in place to keep our patients, staff and the community safe.



Get tested immediately if you have symptoms

As we move down Alert Levels it is essential that we stay home and get tested if we have any COVID-19 symptoms, even if it's only a runny nose.

If you have cold or flu-like symptoms or have been at a location of interest at a relevant time, you should get a COVID-19 test.

Residents or visitors can contact 0800 VIRUS-19 (0800 847 8719) or book a test through your GP. Please do not attend the Emergency Department to seek a test. Testing is FREE.

If you are symptomatic, you should stay home until a negative result is returned and you are symptom-free. If you have been at a location of interest you will need to stay in self-isolation, regardless of your test result, and follow public health advice. Please continue to comply with Alert Level guidelines.

Symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms for COVID-19 may include:

- a fever (high temperature)
- a cough
- shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- a sore throat
- sneezing and a runny or dripping nose
- a temporary loss of sense of smell
- muscle aches and chills

These symptoms do not necessarily mean you have COVID-19. The symptoms are like other illnesses that are much more common, such as colds and flu.

Shortness of breath is a sign of possible pneumonia and requires immediate medical attention.

If you have any of these symptoms, contact your doctor, Healthline on 0800 358 5453 or your iwi health provider.



Our hospitals

Visitor restrictions

At Alert Level 2, inpatients may receive one visitor at a time. This is to help maintain physical distancing requirements on the wards.

Visitors are asked to follow Level 2 requirements including wearing a mask, scanning, hand hygiene and staying home if they are sick.

Visiting times

Dunedin Hospital: 2pm – 8pm
Southland Hospital: 2pm – 8pm
Lakes District Hospital: 2 - 6pm
Wakari Hospital: 2pm - 8pm

*Some wards have special visiting guidelines – for more details go to www.southernhealth.nz/COVID-19

Non-urgent surgery and outpatient appointments

We continue to resume non-urgent surgeries and appointments across the region, in order of clinical priority. You may be asked to attend your appointment online or by telephone. Please be reassured that you will be contacted as soon as we can if you have an outstanding appointment or surgery.

Screening for COVID-19 risk

Please expect to be asked questions about your possible exposure to or symptoms of COVID-19 if you:

- are presenting to an Emergency Departments, or are supporting someone in the ED
- are attending an outpatient appointment, or arriving for an elective surgery or procedure – please note that this screening will mostly be undertaken prior to the patient arriving at the hospital.

Visitors are not screened at Alert Level 2.

Maternity

Women in labour in a maternity facility can have one support partner for the duration of the labour and birth. There is a maximum of one visitor at a time and one visit per day for women in antenatal inpatient or postnatal wards.



Other essential services

District nursing

The district nursing service are now providing a full range of services with home visits and clinic recommencing. Referrals are being accepted as normal. There may be some changes to how some services are delivered.

Home care services

Home and Community Support Services are progressively returning to providing a full range of services. Clients will be contacted by the provider. There may be some changes to how some services are delivered.

Home Team/Community Rehab

These services are operating as normal and patients will be contacted if there is a change to their schedule.

Hospice

Hospice services continue to be delivered through Otago and Southland. Inpatient and community services are running largely as normal. Access to advice and support is available 24/7 (Otago 0800 473 6005 and Southland 0800 211 308) and is not limited to patients known to the Hospice.

Meals on Wheels

The Meals on Wheels services are being delivered as usual. Clients should have a good back up plan just in case a meal doesn't make it to its destination.

Te Punaka Oraka Public Health nursing

Public health nursing services are available to schools and families for child and youth health. Please contact: publichealthnursing@southernhdb.govt.nz

Before school checks

This service is available and bookings can be made by free phone text 0800 247224



In the community

General Practices

General Practices are open. If you would ordinarily call your doctor, call your doctor.

Pharmacy

Pharmacies are open. Please check opening times, as they may be different to usual.

Dental care

At Level 2, low-risk patients are able to receive a normal range of dental care from their usual provider. Patients identified as high risk will only be able to have essential emergency care provided.

Please be aware that we are expecting to catch up on a lot of deferred work over the next few weeks.

Community Oral Health Services for children aged 0-12 years are open – contact the Oral Health team on Otago 0800 672 543, and Southland 0800 570 300. For adults in the Southern district, please contact your usual provider.

Blood tests

Most collection centres are open. To find a list of collection centres and their opening hours, please go to <https://sclabs.co.nz/collection-centres/>

Sexual health

Dunedin and Southland sexual health clinics are open. Please contact the clinic to arrange a consultation. There are no drop-in clinics available.

Dunedin Clinic:

Open Monday to Friday 9am - 6.30pm
Phone 0800 742 546 ext 1

Invercargill clinic:

Open Mondays to Friday 9am-4.30pm
Phone 0800 742 546 ext 2

Youth health clinics

Youth health & wellbeing, sexual health & contraception services are available. Please contact your public health nurse or email: publichealthnursing@southernhdb.govt.nz



There's a smile behind my mask



For more information about these services:
southernhealth.nz/sdhdCOVID19/current-status

Getting Southern protected from COVID-19

Southern DHB Vaccine Update

Where can I get a vaccine?

There are over 110 vaccine centres across Otago and Southland, including in the Meridian Mall, Dunedin, and Civic Building, Invercargill, as well as general practices, pharmacies, and Māori health providers all around the district.

Some of these locations require you to book, while others are offering drive-in or walk-in options.

To find a vaccine centre near you, go to our online clinic finder at www.southernhealth.nz/COVID19/clinics. You can book now at www.bookmyvaccine.nz or phone 0800 28 29 26

We have the largest geographical area of all DHBs, and want everyone in the district to be within one hour of a vaccine centre.

Who can get a vaccine?

Everyone in New Zealand aged 12 and over is eligible for vaccination. It does not matter what your visa or residency status is – you are eligible. There is enough vaccine for everyone in New Zealand to be vaccinated, no one will miss out.

Who has been vaccinated so far?

Most people in the Southern district now have some protection from COVID-19 – thank you all. Around 74.5% of the population over 12 has had at least one dose of the vaccine and 38.7% are fully vaccinated.

Altogether, 328,102 doses of the vaccine have been delivered in the Southern district.

Let's keep up the great work.

The Southern COVID-19 programme ramped up significantly during Alert Levels 3 and 4. Despite the challenges – adjusting clinics to operate under the new alert levels, and general practices also busy testing for COVID-19 – we had our busiest weeks yet.

It took 145 days to deliver 100,000 doses, 32 days to deliver the next 100,000 doses and just 2 weeks to deliver the third 100,000 doses.

This is thanks to the hard work of our healthcare providers across the district and the enthusiastic response from the public, so thank you all for doing your bit to keep you and your community safe!

Board Update



Pete Hodgson, Chair

Vaccination magic in the Southern Region

I often use these columns to raise issues that might otherwise not get a lot of publicity. But this time I am doing the opposite. It is time to celebrate the remarkable vaccination progress made in recent times, throughout Otago and Southland, even though you have been reading all about it and watching it for weeks. And I want to thank everyone who have made it possible.

There has been some special television coverage of Ngai Tahu health provider Te Kaika leading the charge with the first drive through vaccination centre in New Zealand, at the Edgar centre in Dunedin. We enjoyed the community turning up for their jab on Stewart Island. We have seen and read about initiatives in Queenstown, or of students lining up at the Forsyth Barr stadium.

They are remarkable stories, but they don't begin to describe the complexity and the reach of the entire effort. The campaign began in two mass vaccination centres - the Meridian Centre in Dunedin and the Civic Centre in Invercargill.

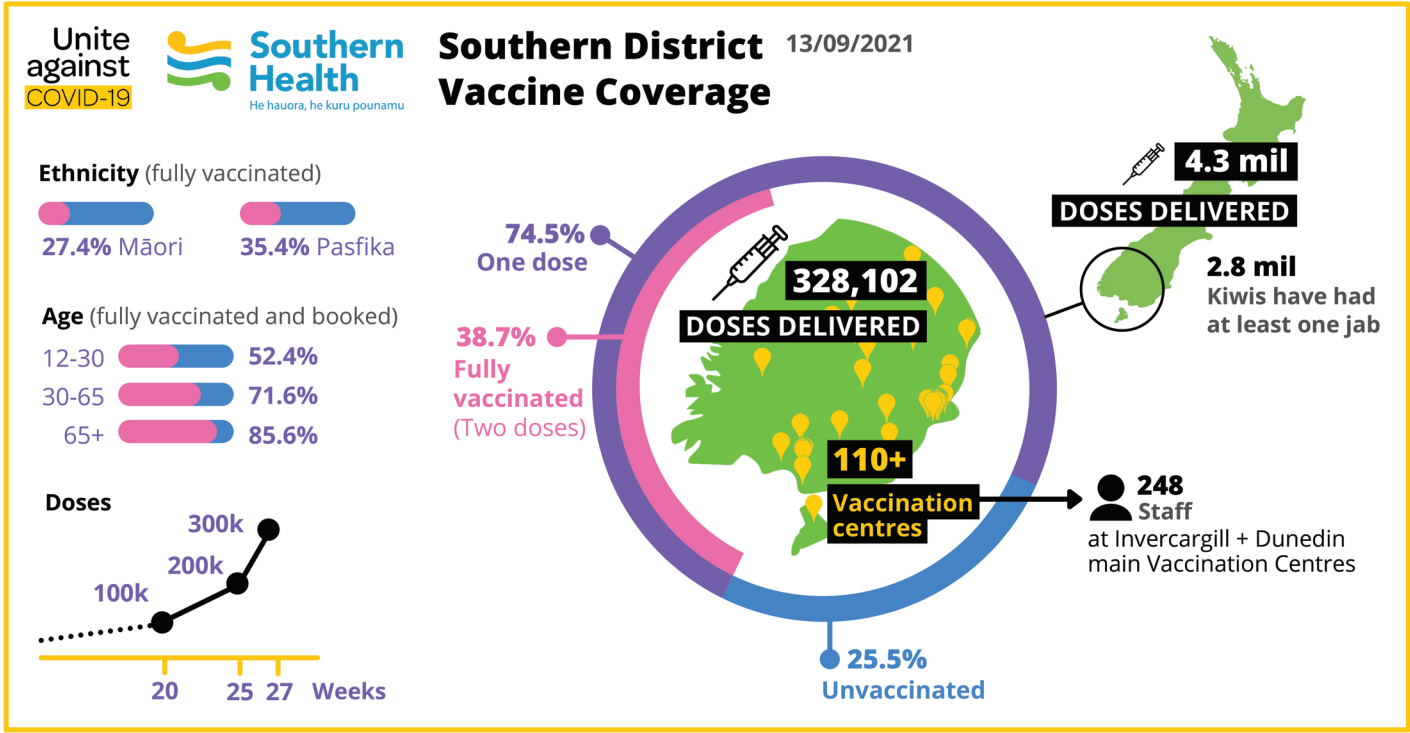
But it has mushroomed – nearly all medical practices are now involved, over 70 of them, in partnership with the WellSouth primary health network. So are almost 40 pharmacies, as well as specialist Māori and Pacifica providers.

Southland's land area is just a little larger than Belgium's, and Otago is just a little larger than Southland. So vaccination coverage presents special challenges. Very often rural communities like Fiordland, the Waitaki Valley or the Catlins are serviced entirely by the local health providers who are well known and well trusted. In other cases communities are visited by outreach teams.

And altogether it is working. Health professionals and administrative staff have between them surpassed expectations and planning. They, and the SDHB team who have put the whole programme together deserve our grateful thanks.

We, the public have done our bit too; we have been rolling up in our droves.

Get a vaccination everyone.



The chase to trace



Public Health Contract Tracer Debby Newton and Public Health South Community MIQ Service Coordinator Pete Whalley



outbreak response so when this occurs, it's all hands to the pump," says Pete Whalley, Southern DHB Public Health South Community MIQ Service Coordinator. "The work can be swift and relentless – particularly in the first 48 hours."

The initial call to someone who has been in contact with a COVID case can take from 15 minutes to an hour, depending on the person. There is a set of questions all contacts are asked, including confirmation they were at an exposure event, if they have any symptoms, their living situation and if they have any specific needs.

A typical day starts around 8am when teams are briefed and allocated contacts. "The average contract tracer makes between 30-40 phone calls a day in tandem with information inputting, texting and emailing," says Pete.

"We continue calling and doing check-

ins until around 8:00pm, tidy up and make sure we are ready to do it all again tomorrow."

Public Health South Smokefree Coordinator-turned-contact-tracer Debby Newton says while the role is challenging, it is rewarding to be part of the nationwide COVID-19 response.

"Some of the calls can be really hard, with people feeling stressed and anxious, particularly if there is a delay in their results," says Debby. "Having a reassuring voice on the end of the phone each day really helps and it's extremely rewarding to support them through their isolation time."

"Contact tracing is about teamwork and I'm so proud of how the Public Health Unit stepped up to respond to this outbreak. We knew our roles and got on with the mahi required."

Having worked as a contract tracer in all the COVID-19 outbreaks in New Zealand, Debby's advice to the public is simple. "If you have symptoms, please get a COVID test and then stay at home until you have a negative result. And scan, scan, scan – that makes our work so much easier."

They are New Zealand's secret weapon against one of the world's most disruptive viruses, and yet you won't see them wearing PPE at the frontline or on our television screens swabbing patients. Instead, they're usually sitting at a desk in front of a screen, with a phone and a long list of people to contact.

They are our contract tracers – our country's cavalry on the hill. And with each outbreak comes the arduous task of pulling together the missing pieces of a nation-wide puzzle.

"Contact tracing is an essential part of Public Health in the event of any