

Preparing for COVID-19 in the community

Being as prepared as possible for COVID in the community and working to mitigate its impacts are the best things we can do to reduce anxiety, increase resilience, and keep ourselves, our whānau and our communities safe.

There are simple, practical things we can all do to be personally prepared in case we, someone in our household, or a work colleague, becomes ill or when COVID-19 becomes common in our community.

Get ready

Make a plan for home and work so that if you catch COVID and/or have to self-isolate, you're ready and know what to do.

Have good support networks in place – stay connected via phone or online with family, whānau, friends, neighbours, colleagues, or faith-based support.

For people who live alone, or who need extra support, it will be available. But it's important for everyone to be as personally prepared as possible for COVID because individual situations and welfare needs will be different and it will take time to arrange the appropriate support.

Use this checklist to help you plan

- Have enough essential supplies on hand so that you won't need to leave your home if you become ill**
 - Avoid panic buying - add a few extra items each time you shop
 - Remember to renew your prescription medications ahead of time
 - Think about the comfort items you'd want to have on hand if you're sick like tissues, extra pain relief, ice blocks for sore throats, soups and easy-to-cook/eat foods etc.
 - Ask someone if they would be happy to shop for you if needed and drop it off outside
 - Do you have a food bag subscription you can use? (there may be extra pressure on these services)
 - Have home-based activities to keep children and adults entertained

- Make alternative arrangements in case you become unwell or need to care for a sick family member**
 - Have backup childcare in case you or your usual care provider become unwell
 - If you care for dependents, have a backup caregiver in place
 - If you have pets, think about who could feed and care for them
 - Talk to your employer about working from home if possible and get set up with everything you need

- Protect yourself and others against COVID-19**
 - Get vaccinated
 - Stay home if you are sick
 - Get tested if you have any COVID-19 systems even if they are mild
 - Keep a record of where you have been
 - Wear a face mask
 - Maintain good hand hygiene
 - Maintain physical distancing
 - Download a personal COVID-tracer QR code for your home

- Communicate and connect**
 - Share your plan with your family, whānau, friends, neighbours and work colleagues
 - Set up a buddy system to check in on each other by phone, email or text during times of need

How will hospital services be affected if we have local COVID cases?

Most people with COVID will be cared for at home. For patients with COVID in the Southern region who need to go to hospital, they will be cared for at Dunedin Hospital. More care will be offered by Telehealth.

Unlike last year when planned surgery and many outpatient appointments were postponed because of lockdowns, the DHB is planning to continue these activities as much as possible whilst ensuring patients, visitors and staff are safe.