

## Get your household ready for COVID-19

Vaccination is the best protection against COVID-19, so we encourage you to be fully vaccinated and get your booster as soon as possible. There are also many simple, practical things you can do to prepare in case you, or someone in your household becomes unwell, or if COVID-19 becomes common in our community.



### Make a plan that includes:

- Essential supplies on hand so you will not need to leave your home if you become ill:
  - Avoid panic buying. Add a few extra items every time you shop
  - Remember to renew your prescription medications.
- Alternative arrangements in case you become ill or if you need to care for a sick family member. For example:
  - Have backup childcare in case you or your usual care provider become ill
  - If you care for dependents, have a backup caregiver in place
  - If you need to self-isolate away from your home have a back-up person to feed/exercise/ look after your animals
  - Talk to your employer about working from home if possible.

### Have your contacts ready:

- Your doctor
- Your pharmacy
- Healthline
- Family
- Friends
- Neighbours
- School
- Work.



### Shopping checklist:

#### Food

- dried pasta and rice
- pasta sauces
- canned soups, vegetables and beans
- pet food and supplies
- dried or long life milk
- baking supplies
- food, formula and drinks for babies and small children.

#### Hygiene

- toilet paper
- feminine hygiene products
- nappies and wipes
- facial tissue
- soap, shampoo and conditioner
- alcohol-based hand sanitiser containing at least 60% alcohol.

#### Health care

- Regular medicines
- thermometer
- throat lozengers
- medical masks
- household rubber gloves
- tissues
- heat and cool packs
- fever-reducing medications (e.g. paracetamol/ibuprofen).

#### Cleaning

- paper towels
- plastic bin bags
- laundry detergent
- regular household cleaning products
- hard-surface disinfectant, or if not available, concentrated (5%) liquid bleach and a separate container for dilution.



## The time to get your booster is now

It takes about two weeks after vaccination for the body to build protection against COVID-19, so the time to act is now. Getting the booster vaccination is your best defence against Omicron. It protects people against serious illness and decreases the need for hospitalisation and ICU care. You can now get your booster shot three months after you have received your last full vaccination dose.

**Don't delay! Book your booster, 5–11-year-old vaccination and first and second dose online now at the BookMyVaccine website or by calling 0800 28 29 26**

## Southern hospitals - increase in safety measures

As the number of COVID-19 cases grow, safety measures have increased in Lakes District, Dunedin, Southland, Clutha and Gore Hospitals to keep our community safe and limit contact with other patients as much as possible.

### Safety measures include:

- Only one visitor at a time is able to visit patients on wards.
- Only one person may accompany someone who is attending an outpatient appointment or presenting at the Emergency Department for care (children may accompany a parent or sibling if childcare is not available).
- All patients and visitors entering the hospital will be screened for COVID-19. Patients who are admitted to wards will undergo a COVID-19 test on admission (please note the hospital does not provide general COVID-19 testing).
- Visitors are required to scan in, sanitise hands and all those over the age of 8 are required to wear a surgical face mask. People presenting to direct entry services may be given an N95 mask to wear.
- Please keep our ED for emergencies only. Contact Healthline or your GP in the first instance if you need health advice.
- Maternity services – please call your lead maternity carer or the maternity unit in advance for pre-screening, after-hours access and restrictions for patients/visitors.
- Those visiting the hospital for other appointments including Outpatients clinics, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy and X-Ray/ CT should continue to use the Main Hospital Entrance.



**Key information for patients and visitors can be found on the southern health website [www.southernhealth.nz/](http://www.southernhealth.nz/) COVID19/hospital-services**

## Look after your wellbeing

It's been a stressful time for our community and as COVID-19 gets closer to home for us all, it's even more important to prioritise looking after ourselves and each other. You might be feeling a bit flat, fatigued, anxious, tearful, overwhelmed, or even relieved that it's finally here. This is all completely normal.

We all need a bit of extra support every now and again so if you, or someone you know, is struggling, there's a range of free help available.

### National helplines:

- **Free call or text 1737 to speak with a trained counsellor any time of the day or night (24/7).**
- Youthline – 0800 376633, free text 234 or email [talk@youthline.co.nz](mailto:talk@youthline.co.nz).
- Lifeline – 0800 543 354 or text "help" to 4357. This 24/7 helpline has qualified counsellors and trained volunteers.
- PlunketLine - 0800 933 922. A free 24/7 parent helpline and advice service available to all families, whānau and caregivers. Calls are also free from mobile phones.
- What's up? – 0800 942 8787. This is a nationwide, confidential counselling helpline for children and young people.
- Counsellors are available 365 days a year and it's free to call, including from a mobile phone. Check out [www.whatsapp.org.nz](http://www.whatsapp.org.nz)
- Family Drug Support Aotearoa New Zealand [www.fds.org.nz](http://www.fds.org.nz) offers a nationwide 0800 337877 phone support service 9am-10pm, 7 days per week. The support line is staffed by trained volunteers.
- National Anxiety Helpline: 0800 269 4389 (0800 ANXIETY) A free 24/7 help line with trained volunteers.
- Samaritans: 0800 726 666 a free 24/7 help line operated by volunteers to support those experiencing everything from loneliness to despair.



# Hearts of gold helped heal car crash trauma



David with his grandchild

When David Harrington came around a bend on his way to work in Invercargill in – he was blissfully unaware this was the moment his life would change forever.

In the early hours of the morning on August 13 2020, David's car collided head-on with a cow loose on the road, breaking every bone in his face, including his jaw.

He was urgently flown to Dunedin Hospital where he underwent a nine

and a half hour facial reconstruction operation, followed by a two month stay.

He credits Southern DHB staff, including the emergency response, trauma, surgical teams and specialists for his recovery.

"They were magnificent, absolutely fantastic. I'm just so pleased to have had my surgery and rehabilitation in the Dunedin and Southland Hospitals," says David.

"I wouldn't have received the customised support if I wasn't down here in the South. The staff have hearts of gold."

His wife Kelly, fondly referred to by David as "the million dollar lady" was by his side throughout. "Kelly is a nurse herself, so she helped me in every way you could imagine. There were a lot of long nights and I couldn't ask for a better person."

David was particularly grateful for being able to go home earlier than planned.

*"I was feeling terribly homesick and the staff really listened and responded, coming up with a plan for my early release."*

Just over a year and a half later, the journey to recovery has been a long one, but with hard work, patience and a heavy dose of determination, David is optimistic about the future.

"There are parts of my brain that still haven't healed, which can be frustrating," says David.

*"I know I have to be patient and I'm always the optimist. I can still give my grandchildren a hug and say hello to friends."*

A member of the Gore Community Church, David's ordeal has strengthened his faith in god and the power of love. "Life is life and love really does melt everything away."

## Board Update



Pete Hodgson, Chair

### We Are Ready

We are ready for Omicron, which has started to spread through Otago and Southland at the time you read this.

Being ready is not the same as predicting and preventing everything. People are going to get sick, go to hospital or die. Omicron will catch us out in many ways.

Being ready means planning and preparing thoroughly. The entire health system locally has done that. The hospitals have, medical centres have and pharmacies have. So have Kaupapa Māori services and community services. And so have other government agencies along side the health system. As Omicron moves through it will test that planning and preparation, and it will find plenty of imperfections.

Omicron is so infectious that soon it will make no sense to try and stamp it out and we will instead try to suppress it. We might have some success, because our vaccination rates are so high. All ethnic groups now at least 90% double vaccinated, and the total 12+ year population is now 96% double vaccinated, and counting! It is a remarkable effort.

If you haven't already, now is the time to book in your booster for substantial additional protection. Everyone aged 18 and over who has been fully vaccinated for at least three months can get a free booster now – reducing the chance of more serious infection, and the need for hospitalisation.

Omicron will still come and when it does, please think of health workers. They will have about eight weeks of high stress. Modelling suggests that during that time 20% or 30% of our health workforce will have to stand down, to self-isolate or because they themselves have COVID 19. Others will have to step up.

Omicron will hit primary and community care the hardest – your GP or your diabetes nurse, your Māori health provider or your mental health practitioner. The people you may well know by name.

Hospitals will be hit too – EDs and wards may become congested or swamped, and some folk will end up in ICU. But, because so many of us have been vaccinated, most of us will have a milder disease.

That is why vaccination is the best preparation of them all.

## Southern DHB supports Tonga outreach

The Southern DHB Dunedin Hospital community banded together to support their Tongan colleagues in early February, raising money and essential items following the devastating underwater volcanic eruption and tsunami in January.

Southern DHB Health Care Assistant Kym Makanesi began fundraising efforts within the Dunedin Hospital after the natural disaster struck. "The drive was mainly to provide food supplies to the outer islands and for our families who have been highly effected," says Kym. "We managed to

collect over 35 banana boxes of canned goods, non-perishable and essential items. We also raised just over \$1650.

*"I am so grateful for the love we have been shown from our wonderful city of Dunedin and I am so thankful to be working for a supportive DHB."*



Tonga Collection Outreach site in South Dunedin



### If you are sick get tested

If you have cold or flu-like symptoms, no matter how mild, get tested for COVID-19.

COVID-19 symptoms can start off being as simple as a scratchy throat, sneezing, or a bit of a runny nose. If COVID-19 is identified early it can make a huge difference for our families, whānau and community. If you have symptoms, or have been at a location of interest, get tested and stay home until you receive a negative test result.

To find your nearest testing location in the Southern district you can call 0800 VIRUS19 (0800 847 8719) or visit the WellSouth website ([wellsouth.nz](https://wellsouth.nz)).