

# COVID-19 Message Grid

## 17 March 2022

This contains the most up-to-date and approved messaging on key COVID-19 matters.

Information that changes or is added between grids will be highlighted. Please ensure you are using the most up to date version.

This version was current at 17/03/2022 4:11 pm.

**In this edition:**

**Unite Against COVID-19 .....1**

**Travel .....4**

**Vaccinations.....5**

## Unite Against COVID-19

Topic	Key Message	Supporting Messages	Notes
Auckland update	Case numbers in Auckland continue to track down which confirms last week’s optimism that Auckland has passed the peak of Omicron cases.	<p>Case numbers are expected to continue to decline over the coming weeks.</p> <p>There is an expected long tail of this outbreak likely to occur. There are concerns the outbreak will start to impact on older and more medically vulnerable populations.</p> <p>At this stage, cases remain predominantly in younger age groups, however there is an increasing number of older people in hospital with severe illness.</p>	Dr Andrew Old, NHRCC Chief Clinical Officer

		It's important to remain vigilant to prevent further spread into groups who are at higher risk of ending up in hospital.	
Hospitalisations update	Hospitalisations in Auckland remain high with 618 people currently in hospital in the region.	<p>As cases decline, new admissions are also plateauing, there is hope that hospitalisations will begin to decline in the coming weeks.</p> <p>The average age of people hospitalised in the Northern region remains about 40 years old, with 20% of all hospitalisations between in the last month people over the age of 65.</p> <p>While total average length of stay is less than 2 days, for people over the age of 65 it's more than 3 days, again highlighting the additional risk for older people.</p> <p>Vaccination continues to be your best defence against severe illness and hospitalisation. With half of the population now boosted, this group make up just 11% of hospital admissions.</p>	Dr Andrew Old, NHRCC Chief Clinical Officer
Auckland emergency departments update	30% of patients admitted to Middlemore Emergency Department tested positive for COVID-19.	<p>Middlemore hospital have 5 wards dedicated to COVID-19 patients and like other DHBs in the Northern regions, have deferred all clinics and surgery that are not time critical. Where clinics have been deferred, staff have been redeployed.</p> <p>Middlemore are seeing more medically vulnerable patients in the ED and often it's the underlying medical conditions of patients which are having the greatest impact and the need for hospitalisation.</p> <p>Some prevalent conditions include: diabetes, heart disease, and chronic lung disease.</p>	Dr Vanessa Thornton, Clinical Director Hospital Services, CMDHB.
Review of hospitalisations in Auckland	An initial case review of 400 admissions to hospital has found that about one third have COVID clearly as their reason for admission.	<p>A further third of people appear to have COVID-19 as a secondary finding and a quarter of people were diagnosed with COVID-19 during their admission.</p> <p>The remaining 8% was made up of people for whom more information was needed highlighting how challenging differentiating the contribution of COVID can be to any individual admission.</p> <p>This data is based on case reviews of 400 individuals' clinical notes and has been anonymised.</p>	Dr Andrew Old, NHRCC Chief Clinical Officer

Testing update	Testing remains and important part in the response to Omicron.	<p>People should continue to upload both positive and negative RAT results to MyCovidRecord.</p> <p>The results of tests continue to assist health officials direct the actions taken to support the community, as well as providing important information about where we are in the outbreak. It also helps to indicate the trend of the virus.</p> <p>If there is a good indication of how many people are negative, it's easier to work out the trends of the virus and the care that might be needed in the future. This benefits every person, their whānau, and the community as a whole.</p>	Dr Andrew Old, NHRCC Chief Clinical Officer
Winter update	The risks of this Omicron outbreak remain high and it's important that everyone continues to play their part.	<p>The current Omicron outbreak is expected to have a long tail for the whole country. As has occurred overseas, what could happen here is the resurgence of cases after an initial peak of cases.</p> <p>As winter is just around the corner, it's important not to forget about other vaccine preventable diseases as well.</p> <p>People we are eligible are asked to please get their flu vaccine when they're available in a couple of weeks. If there are kids in the household, please check to see they're up to date with their childhood immunisations to protect them against diseases like measles and whooping cough.</p> <p>If you haven't already, please do get vaccinated against COVID-19 including your booster.</p>	Dr Andrew Old, NHRCC Chief Clinical Officer
Health update	Hospitalisations, cases and testing	<p><b>Hospitalisations</b></p> <p>There are currently 930 people in hospitals across New Zealand.</p> <p>23 cases are in high dependency or intensive care units.</p> <p><b>Deaths</b></p> <p>A total of 10 deaths were reported today. This takes the total number of publicly reported COVID-19 related deaths to 151 and the 7-day rolling average of reported deaths to 8.</p> <p><b>Cases</b></p>	MoH web, 17 March

There are 19,566 new cases in the community and 25 new cases identified at the border.

### Testing

534 cases were identified through PCR testing and 19,032 via RAT in the last 24 hours.

## Vaccinations

Topic	Key message	Supporting messages	Notes
Booster programme update	Yesterday 6,003 booster doses were administered in New Zealand	The total number of people who have received boosters – including those vaccinated overseas – is 2,535,944 boosted (72.9% of those eligible).	MoH web, 17 March
Vaccination progress	95.4% of eligible people in New Zealand have had two vaccine doses	Vaccines administered in New Zealand yesterday: 369 first doses; 543 second doses; 28 third primary doses.  People vaccinated (including those vaccinated overseas): All Ethnicities (percentage of eligible people aged 12+): 4,070,293 first dose (96.7%); 4,013,796 second dose (95.4%), 2,535,944 boosted (72.9% of those eligible).	MoH web, 17 March
Paediatric vaccines	399 paediatric first doses and 4,083 paediatric second doses were administered yesterday	To date, 255,444 paediatric first doses and 19,764 paediatric second doses have been administered in New Zealand.	MoH web, 17 March

## International travel

Topic	Key message	Supporting messages	Notes
Tourism fund update	Tourism Kick-start Fund opens on 1 April	Tourism businesses in the 5 South Island communities most reliant on international visitors will be able to	MBIE PR, 17 March

apply for support from the \$49 million Tourism Kick-start Fund initiative on 1 April.

The Fund is one of 3 business initiatives available in the 5 communities and was launched last year as part of the Tourism Communities: Support, Recovery and Re-set Plan. The Fund will support businesses to prepare for the return of international visitors.

A grant valued between \$10,000 and \$50,000 is available to eligible businesses in Westland, Southland, Kaikōura, Mackenzie and Queenstown Lakes Districts.

Specialist local agencies will administer the grants and help businesses with their applications.

Businesses can start the process by checking the eligibility criteria and other information [here](#).

Reconnecting New Zealand to the World

Dates for opening border to tourists moved forward

From 11.59pm Tuesday 12 April, vaccinated Australians will be able to travel to New Zealand isolation-free.

This will mean reopening in time for the Australian school holidays.

From 11.59pm Sunday 1 May, vaccinated travellers from visa-waiver countries such as the UK, US, Japan and Germany, and those with valid visitor visas will be able to arrive.

Tourists will not need to isolate on arrival. They will be required to have had a pre-departure test, with two further rapid antigen tests on day 0/1 and 5/6.

Further advice will be received shortly on options for non-visa waiver travellers, who are currently due to be allowed to enter New Zealand from October.

Prime Minister PR, 16 March