

# COVID-19 Message Grid

## 22 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 22/03/2022 5:08 pm.

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## Unite Against COVID-19

Topic	Key Message	Supporting Messages	Notes
Update on current outbreak	Analysis from the Ministry of Health confirms Auckland has likely seen the peak of Omicron cases and are on their way down.	<p>Case numbers across Auckland today were 4,291. Down by a third based on 13,252 cases reported on 4 March.</p> <p>Hospitalisations are also levelling off in the Northern Region DHBs (Northland, Waitemata, Auckland and Counties Manukau) now they are passed the peak of the Omicron surge</p> <p>There are encouraging signs that cases are peaking in the Bay of Plenty, Lakes, Hauora Tairāwhiti, Taranaki, Waikato and Wellington regions.</p> <p>Case numbers are still increasing in the South Island.</p>	DG, MoH media stand-up 22 March

International update on hospitalisations	International experience of Omicron suggests that in New Zealand we can expect cases will likely remain in the low thousands per day for some time.	<p>Hospitalisation numbers will likely peak within the next two weeks and then trend downwards in April, though likely relatively slowly and we expect considerable regional variation.</p> <p>Overseas experience with hospitalisations is variable; in some places hospitalisation rates have declined at the same rate as they rose, while others plateaued and declined more gradually.</p> <p>We can expect ongoing waves of COVID with elevated base levels of cases and hospitalisations.</p>	DG, MoH media stand-up 22 March
International update on cases numbers and variants	Case numbers globally have started to rise again in recent weeks.	<p>There are increased case numbers again across the UK, with Scotland hit the hardest by a surge in cases of Omicron BA.2 infections and case numbers just under their previous peak and hospitalisation figures at their highest level since 2020.</p> <p>Globally, it is likely that there will be further waves of Omicron and new variants with unknown severity – and New Zealand will face these as well.</p> <p>Countries experiencing another surge in cases from Omicron appear to be more affected by the more transmissible Omicron BA.2 subvariant. In New Zealand our current high prevalence of Omicron BA.2 may mean that we don't see an additional surge of the same size found overseas.</p>	DG, MoH media stand-up 22 March
Update on demand to GPs	General Practices (GPs) are having 15% more encounters with people each day compared to 2021.	<p>Increases vary depending on different parts of New Zealand.</p> <p>Being observed is a mirroring in regions where cases numbers fall so does the demand on GPs.</p> <p>Auckland is beginning to return to normal levels. Hawkes Bay is seeing 33% more people compared to this time last year. Canterbury is seeing 30% more encounters than last year. This is expected to continue across the South Island.</p>	Dr Joe Bourne, MoH media stand-up 22 March
Self-assessment form update	Additions have been made to the self-assessment form to ensure	People receive a text message when they test positive for COVID-19 which links to the self-assessment form. That form is vital for care coordination hubs can	Dr Joe Bourne, MoH media

	<p>people's needs are accounted for during isolation.</p>	<p>understand any needs people in the community may have while they are isolating.</p> <p>A new addition to the form allows people to declare a disability they are living with. This alerts the coordination hub to ensure they are prioritised for contact to find out their needs during isolation.</p> <p>An additional new feature of the form also allows people to flag if they have a problem with where they are isolating. This will enable the coordination team follow up with people who may need support to isolate.</p>	<p>stand-up 22 March</p>
<p>Influenza vaccination programme</p>	<p>The influenza vaccination programme starts in early April</p>	<p>Extra vaccines have been ordered and the criteria for eligibility for free vaccination has been widened.</p> <p>Other infectious diseases, particularly flu and RSV/Respiratory Syncytial Virus (in children), could generate additional demand on the health system over winter.</p> <p>The Ministry of Health are also looking at the role a fourth dose of the Pfizer vaccine for vulnerable groups, including older people.</p> <p>People who aren't already, are strongly encouraged to ensure they are up to date with their vaccinations, which includes getting a booster when it's due.</p> <p>Vaccination saves lives.</p>	<p>DG, MoH media stand-up 22 March</p>
<p>Health update</p>	<p>Hospitalisations, cases and testing</p>	<p><b>Hospitalisations</b></p> <p>There are currently 1,016 people in hospitals across New Zealand.</p> <p>25 cases are in high dependency or intensive care units.</p> <p><b>Deaths</b></p> <p>A total of 15 deaths were reported today. These deaths take the total number of publicly reported COVID related deaths to 199 and the 7-day rolling average of reported deaths to 10.</p> <p><b>Cases</b></p>	<p>MoH web, 22 March</p>

There are 17,020 new cases in the community and 34 new cases identified at the border.

### Testing

231 cases were identified through PCR testing and 20,676 via RAT in the last 24 hours.

## Vaccinations

Topic	Key message	Supporting messages	Notes
Booster programme update	Yesterday 3,763 booster doses were administered in New Zealand	The total number of people who have received boosters – including those vaccinated overseas – is 2,555,907 boosted (72.8% of those eligible).	MoH web, 22 March
Vaccination progress	95.1% of eligible people in New Zealand have had two vaccine doses	Vaccines administered in New Zealand yesterday: 183 first doses; 322 second doses; 21 third primary doses.  People vaccinated (including those vaccinated overseas): all Ethnicities (percentage of eligible people aged 12+): 4,053,907 first dose (96.3%); 4,000,867 second dose (95.1%), 2,555,907 boosted (72.8% of those eligible).	MoH web, 22 March
Paediatric vaccines	198 paediatric first doses and 3,717 paediatric second doses were administered yesterday	To date, 257,186 paediatric first doses and 44,155 paediatric second doses have been administered in New Zealand.	MoH web, 22 March