



**St John**  
Here for Life

# Covid-19 Advice

## For event organisers

Event Health Services | Version: 02

1<sup>st</sup> March 2020

To date, New Zealand has had a single isolated case of COVID-19. Current New Zealand Ministry of Health advice is that there is a low risk of a sustained outbreak in New Zealand, although sporadic cases are expected.

Our advice to event organisers if you have any concerns regarding whether your event should go ahead, is to follow the specific Ministry of Health guidelines titled '[COVID-19, Advice for public events and mass gatherings](#)'. The key message is to not alter current arrangements, and instead take steps to mitigate risk through good hygiene practices and planning. The most recent version dated 21<sup>st</sup> of February is copied below, however please do review the weblink for the most up to date information.

From a St John service delivery perspective, the advice from our Medical Director is that we should not do anything differently at events and mass gatherings to what we do currently although a common-sense approach is always advised. Issuing surgical masks is felt unnecessary and has the potential to cause undue panic amongst the public. If a patient presents to St John staff with a fever and/or respiratory symptoms, we will take standard personal protection equipment precautions which includes hand washing, the use of hand sanitising gel and gloves, plus a surgical mask for the staff member and patient. Although highly unlikely, if the patient is suspected to have a COVID-19 infection our Event Medics will manage the patient as per St John issued COVID-19 guidelines and will have access to 24/7 support from our clinical desk and duty manager. In addition, as the event organiser you will be kept fully informed.

If you have any further questions, please contact one of our event consultants directly or via 08004EVENTS.

**Simon Barnett**  
**National EHS Manager**  
**St John, National Headquarters**

## Advice for event organisers, staff and attendees

21 February 2020

The following advice is for people planning, working at or attending public events or mass gatherings where many people are together in one place, at one time for a set period. Examples include concerts, festivals and sports matches. The advice below will also be helpful to those organising conferences, weddings, tangi and other events.

### Event organisers

#### How to proceed with large public events

At this stage, the Ministry of Health does not propose altering arrangements for public events. If you are an event organiser, you should focus on:

- reminding the public and event workers not to attend if they are feeling unwell
- reminding the public and event workers not to attend if they have been in or transited through mainland China, or been in close contact with someone confirmed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days
- ensuring your emergency management plan is up to date
- briefing your event staff on how to practice good hygiene and making it easy for staff and attendees to practice good hygiene (see below).

#### How to brief event staff

As always, anyone scheduled to work at a public event should stay home if they feel unwell. Staff should be reminded to always practice good coughing, sneezing and hand hygiene. This includes:

- covering coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or clothing, or coughing/sneezing into your elbow
- disposing of used tissues appropriately in a bin
- washing hands with soap and water and drying them thoroughly or using hand sanitiser:
  - before eating or handling food
  - after using the toilet
  - after coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose or wiping children's noses
  - after caring for sick people.

Food handlers should be extra vigilant with hand hygiene and should not work if they feel unwell. It is also a good idea to clean surfaces regularly with antiseptic wipes or regular household disinfectant, including bleach solutions.

#### Health precautions for staff and attendees

- Display signage at the event entry, near toilets and food preparation areas reminding people to practice good hygiene. A Ministry of Health poster is available to download from our website (see Useful links and resources).
- Ensure you have adequate equipment and/or facilities to support good hygiene practices, such as soap and water and/or hand sanitiser, paper towels and tissues.

- Where appropriate, ensure there are supplies to enable regular cleaning of surfaces.
- Remind people who feel unwell to stay at home.
- Remind the public and event workers not to attend if they have been in or transited through mainland China, or been in close contact with someone confirmed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days.

### Advice on face masks

Face masks are not recommended for most people as there is limited evidence that they prevent the spread of disease. Good cough etiquette and hand hygiene will have a bigger impact. Information about the effectiveness of face masks and how to wear and remove them is available at [who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks)

### Risk assessments and ongoing response

At this stage there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Zealand and the Ministry of Health does not recommend altering arrangements for public events. However, the situation and our response to it is changing all the time. For the latest advice, keep an eye on the Ministry's COVID-19 website: [health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus)

Before deciding to proceed with, restrict, modify, postpone or cancel your event, we recommend you complete a thorough risk assessment. This means you should consider:

- the latest local, national and international advice on COVID-19 (the Ministry of Health, your local public health unit and the World Health Organization will provide reputable, evidence-based information and updates)
- whether people attending your event may have been exposed to, or infected with, COVID-19 and what risk this might pose to others
- the characteristics of your event (for example, the number of people expected; accommodation arrangements; indoor or outdoor, duration, the countries that participants, performers and attendees are travelling from; etc.) and whether they might increase the risk and/or spread of COVID-19
- what measures you could put in place (see above) to help reduce the spread of any disease.

You should consult local and national authorities as appropriate.

### Event attendees

At this stage there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Zealand and the Ministry of Health does not recommend altering arrangements for public events. However, the situation and our response to it is changing all the time. For the latest advice, keep an eye on the Ministry of Health's COVID-19 website ([health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus)) and check in with the people or organisation in charge of the event you plan to attend. **If you are sick, do not attend public events.**

### Attending public events

The following people should not attend events:

- anyone who is unwell

- anyone arriving in New Zealand who has returned from, or transited through, mainland China, or been in close contact with someone confirmed with COVID-19 in the last 14 days are being asked to self-isolate. Please also register your details with Healthline 0800 358 5453 (or +64 9 358 5453 if using an international SIM) if you have not already.

### **How to minimise the risk of getting sick at an event**

The most important thing to do is practice good hygiene. This means:

- covering coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or coughing/sneezing into your elbow
- disposing of used tissues appropriately in a bin
- washing hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water and drying them thoroughly, or using hand sanitiser:
  - before eating or handling food
  - after using the toilet
  - after coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose or wiping children's noses
  - after touching public surfaces
- trying to keep a metre away from people who are unwell
- limiting alcohol and drug use (as this may affect your ability to adequately follow the advice above).

The measures above are especially important for people who have existing health conditions, such as those with diabetes, renal failure, chronic lung disease or who are immunocompromised.

### **Useful links and resources**

Ministry of Health COVID-19 website: [health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus](https://health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus)

World Health Organization COVID-19 website: [who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019](https://who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019)

Find your local regional public health unit: [health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/key-health-sector-organisations-and-people/public-health-units/public-health-unit-contacts](https://health.govt.nz/new-zealand-health-system/key-health-sector-organisations-and-people/public-health-units/public-health-unit-contacts)

Protect yourself against coronavirus poster (English):

[health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/protect\\_yourself\\_against\\_coronavirus\\_poster\\_v5.pdf](https://health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/protect_yourself_against_coronavirus_poster_v5.pdf)

Protect yourself against coronavirus poster (Simplified Chinese):

[health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/protect\\_yourself\\_against\\_coronavirus\\_poster\\_v5\\_simplified\\_chinese.pdf](https://health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/protect_yourself_against_coronavirus_poster_v5_simplified_chinese.pdf)

If you have health-related concerns about COVID-19, phone the dedicated COVID-19 Healthline (for free) on 0800 358 5453.