



COVID-19

Alert Level 2 guidance for aged residential care facilities

7 September 2021

Under Alert Level 2, extra precautions will continue and visiting in Aged Residential Care (ARC) facilities will be managed in a controlled way to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission to residents and staff.

Public health measures

Public health measures underpin the alert level framework. Along with general health advice focussed on personal hygiene and cleaning, the measures include mask wearing, physical distancing, contact tracing, and testing.

At Alert Level 2, ARC facilities should continue following public health measures and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) guidance.

Facilities should have signs at the entrance to encourage visitors and staff to follow public health rules:

- Mandatory face covering
- Mandatory record-keeping using QR codes and/or an alternative contact tracing system (eg, a signing-in sheet) to manage visitors for contact tracing purpose.
- Basic hygiene measures (hand hygiene, cough and sneeze etiquette and avoiding touching face).

Staff and visitors should stay at home if unwell and call their general practitioner or Healthline (for free) on 0800 358 5453 if they have COVID-19 symptoms and arrange to get tested.

There is more information about the [public health measures](#) available on the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) website.

Testing

To determine whether a resident requires testing or not prior to admission or re-admission, a [COVID-19 Screening form: for a person to enter an aged residential care facility](#) for Alert Levels 1 and 2 (the Screening form) must be completed prior to a person being admitted to an aged residential facility. The Screening form must be completed a maximum of 48 hours before a proposed transfer or admission and will determine whether the person is to be tested for COVID-19.

For all others (including visitors, auditors and service contractors) COVID-19 testing is conducted in accordance with the Ministry's testing guidance. There is more information about this available on the

Ministry website: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-health-professionals/case-definition-and-testing-guidance-covid-19>

PPE

Personal protective equipment should be used correctly and safely in accordance with the Ministry's guidance for health and disability care settings.

Completing a risk assessment when a person's COVID-19 status is unknown will help determine the type of PPE to use, if any. Risk assessments include checking if visitors/attendees/staff have been to a location of interest at the times listed on the Ministry's website, have cold, flu or COVID-19 symptoms, or have had contact with someone who has COVID-19.

[Locations of interest - Ministry of Health](#)

[COVID-19 symptoms - Ministry of Health](#)

The Ministry is continually reviewing advice and guidance on the use of PPE. Read more about the risk assessment questions, the latest advice on PPE and its use in different health care settings, and frequently asked questions about PPE and COVID-19 at www.health.govt.nz/ppe-health.

ARC Care services/activities

Aged Residential Care facilities will operate at their full scope and follow Alert Level 2 public health measures.

Care services/activities restrictions in place at Alert Level 2:

- Admissions:
 - The ARC COVID-19 Screening form for Alert Levels 1 and 2 must be completed a maximum of 48 hours prior to the proposed admission. <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-resources-health-professionals/covid-19-health-sector-providers/covid-19-aged-care-providers#screening-form>
 - 7-day isolation following admission is **not mandatory, it is risk-based** and determined via the Screening form.
- Visiting:
 - A record of all visitors into the facility should be kept
 - Health screening and assessment of visitors will be completed before entering the facility
 - General family visits and non-essential service visits are allowed; however, providers will take precautions and manage visiting in a controlled way to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission to residents and staff
 - Visitors must wear face coverings and follow the mandatory record keeping requirement when visiting an ARC facility
 - Visitors must follow the Ministry's and the facility's infection prevention and control (IPC) measures, for example, hand hygiene, physical distancing and appropriate use of PPE based on risk assessment

- There may be a limit on the number of designated visitors at one time, by appointment and sign in process. Check with the provider directly prior to organising a visit
 - Lengths of visits and visiting areas will be determined at the discretion of the provider, for example consideration will include the resident's health, preference and request, and the number of appointments the facility already has
 - Visitors should stay at home if they are unwell, under investigation of COVID-19 or a contact of someone who is a probable or confirmed COVID-19 case, or have been asked to self isolate.
- Planned and urgent respite care:
 - The Screening form must be completed to assess whether it is safe for a resident to be admitted for respite care.
- Outpatient/medical appointments:
 - All outpatients and medical appointment services are operating
 - Virtual consultations remain an option at Alert Level 2.
- Resident's family/other outings, day programmes, health promotion activities and other community supports:
 - These activities may resume following public health measure
 - Gatherings are restricted in accordance with the government's requirement <https://covid19.govt.nz/activities/events-and-entertainment/#events-and-entertainment-at-alert-level-2>
 - A record of where residents have been must be kept for contact tracing purposes
 - People shouldn't go out if they are unwell. When they are out, they should follow public health measures.
- InterNASC
 - The Screening form must be completed to assess whether a transfer may occur.

HealthCERT audits

HealthCERT is responsible for ensuring hospitals, rest homes, residential disability care facilities and fertility providers provide safe and reasonable levels of service for consumers, as required under the Health and Disability Services (Safety) Act 2001 (the Act). The Act is the legislation that underpins the certification of ARC services.

HealthCERT routine audits (certification audits, surveillance audits, partial provisional audits and provisional audits) will continue to be delivered under a risk-based model, to ensure all requirements under legislation for the safe provision of services are maintained during the on-going COVID-19 pandemic.

Auditors should complete health screening for COVID-19 risk assessment and conduct audits with full regard for health and safety, as well as compliance with any public health and IPC measures, to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 within ARC facilities. There is no requirement for auditors to have a negative COVID-19 test result to enter a facility for audits.

Staff mandatory training programme

Staff mandatory training programmes may resume following public health measures.

interRAI assessments

All interRAI assessments are required to be completed and comply with contractual timeframe requirements.

Related links

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-resources-health-professionals/covid-19-advice-all-health-professionals>

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-health-advice-public/covid-19-mental-health-and-wellbeing-resources>

<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-health-professionals/covid-19-awhina-app>