



COVID-19

COVID-19: Alert Level 3 – Guidance for Well Child Tamariki Ora providers ADVICE

30 August 2021

Regions in Aotearoa New Zealand are now at COVID-19 Alert Level 3. This advice for Well Child Tamariki Ora (WCTO) providers has been updated for WCTO service provision in Alert Level 3.

The objectives of this updated guidance are to:

- refresh advice for WCTO service delivery in Alert Level 3
- minimise possibility of community spread of COVID-19 to protect whānau
- maintain the safety of the clinical workforce.

WCTO is an essential service. WCTO kaimahi should only be deployed to other COVID-19 related services if necessary and where there is capacity after priority work is covered.

WCTO kaimahi may be interested to download the **Awhina app** to easily access the most up to date information for health care workers.

Main points

- 1) WCTO services are expected to continue universally via virtual contacts (phone, telehealth) with whānau who have new pēpi. **In-person WCTO visits are mostly delayed during Alert Level 3.**
- 2) Virtual WCTO contacts and priority populations- virtual WCTO contact (by video or phone) will be prioritised initially for all whānau with newborn pēpi. Prioritise ongoing virtual WCTO contacts for whānau:
 - with pēpi aged between birth and 3 months
 - Māori and/or Pacific
 - first time parents
 - identified by the LMC/midwife as having greater needs at referral into the WCTO service **AND** for all whānau where:
 - the WCTO nurse or LMC/midwife has identified high need
 - whānau have an older tamariki where the WCTO nurse has assessed high long-term health need or risk to tamariki health and wellbeing outcomes.

NB: In any case where high need or health risk has been identified **AND** attempts to contact the whānau have been unsuccessful, providers are expected to have a system in place for liaising with Oranga Tamariki, the Police or Civil Defence to ascertain the safety of tamariki / whānau.

3) Essential in-person WCTO provider contacts

In-person contacts may be arranged on a case-by-case basis, based on the clinical judgement of the WCTO nurse/ LMC, midwife /GP. When the need for an in-person contact has been identified, the WCTO provider is responsible for liaising with the LMC/midwife to ensure up to date relevant information is shared prior to any in-person care being provided by the WCTO provider.

Health and social care needs indicating the need for an essential in-person visit with a WCTO nurse includes:

- poor infant growth
- poor feeding / breast feeding and lactation support
- maternal mental health, infant/whānau distress
- recent discharge from neonatal unit or secondary care where ongoing monitoring is needed
- complex social needs causing risk to health outcomes for pēpi

Specific advice regarding in-person contacts (pre-visit screening and PPE advice link from the Ministry of Health): health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/hp7716_-_personal_protective_equipment_for_community_care_providers_v2.pdf

4) Early notification.

- a. Under Alert Level 3 we are encouraging midwives and lead maternity carers (LMCs) to notify vulnerable whānau to the WCTO provider at two weeks postnatal. LMCs/midwives and WCTO should work together, so whānau are supported collaboratively by both services in the first six weeks.
- b. The transition of care between midwives and lead maternity carers (LMCs) and WCTO/ Primary Care are important. Virtual handover of new baby cases to WCTO provider is recommended for all in-person WCTO contacts.

5) **Sudden unexpected death in infancy (SUDI)** prevention and the distribution of safe sleep beds remains a priority. If whānau require a safe sleep bed or you need further information, please contact your local SUDI coordinator or Hāpai te Hauora 027 601 3997. [COVID-19: Alert Level 4 – Guidance for Well Child Tamariki Ora providers \(health.govt.nz\)](#)

For some whānau, SUDI risks are greater during Alert Level 4 and 3 for several reasons, including:

- Loss of connection to whānau and/ or service supports
- transitional housing or changed housing arrangement
- overcrowded accommodation
- limited access to safe sleep beds and support
- limited information on who to contact for support

6) **Organisations with social support functions.**

- a. Before arranging in-person contact with whānau check with other teams in your organisation or other organisations if they are also visiting whānau so you may be able to coordinate efforts as far as possible.

- 7) When whānau are concerned about the wellbeing of their pēpi, they should be supported to access:
 - a. PlunketLine 0800 933 922
 - b. Healthline 0800 611 116
 - c. local general practice clinic or,
 - d. local hospital emergency care department to arrange timely clinical review even during Alert Level 3 (eg, concern about a respiratory infection, or weight gain), and be encouraged to not delay unnecessarily.
- 8) Clinical examination of pēpi remains an essential clinical service for newborns after birth (provided by LMCs/midwives).
- 9) Whānau should be supported to liaise with their local general practice clinic regarding timing of the six-week immunisation and pēpi check.
- 10) Timely completion of childhood immunisations for tamariki is a priority. This is particularly important for any immunisations that may already be late, and if the lockdown at Alert Level 4 and/or 3 is prolonged. LMCs and WCTO providers are responsible for encouraging whānau to attend general practice for all scheduled immunisations. Immunisation rates, particularly for pēpi Māori, have been negatively affected during the COVID-19 period. Whānau may require support through navigation (navigator, kaiāwhina or WCTO nurse as facilitator) to enable them to attend for immunisation.
- 11) Before School Checks (B4SCs): Non-contact components of the B4SC may be continued during Alert Level 3 using virtual telehealth, preferably video conference. In-person components including clinical assessment will need to be completed subsequently. B4SCs and Vision Hearing Test (VHT) screening should be deferred during Covid-19 Alert Level 3.

Appendices:

- 1) Decision Tree to prioritise whānau for in-person contacts.
- 2) SUDI guidance during COVID-19 Alert Levels

Key contacts and related website advice

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Unite against COVID-19 website: covid19.govt.nz/alert-levels-and-updates

Personal Protective Equipment for community care providers:

[health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/hp7716 -
_personal_protective_equipment_for_community_care_providers_v2.pdf](https://health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/pages/hp7716_-_personal_protective_equipment_for_community_care_providers_v2.pdf)