



**Te Aho o Te Kahu update for people and whānau living with cancer
12 August 2020**

CANCER SERVICES CONTINUE UNDER INCREASED ALERT LEVELS

Tēnā koutou katoa

Te Aho o Te Kahu understands you and your whānau may feel unsettled by the news we have COVID-19 cases, with an unknown source, in New Zealand. It is OK to be worried, but please know that cancer centres around the country are prepared to continue delivering essential cancer services at all alert levels.

ALERT LEVEL 3 - AUCKLAND

At Level 3, cancer centres must follow the physical distancing guidelines which may impact how treatment is delivered. It is extremely important that we protect people living with cancer from the risk of catching COVID-19.

At Level 3:

- Hospitals will be looking to run outpatient appointments virtually where possible (eg, phone conversation or video call). You will be contacted by your cancer centre with the details.
- If you have treatment or a scan scheduled, please attend this as normal
- If you have concerns about travelling or coming to hospital because of your health, please contact your cancer centre BEFORE your appointment or treatment
- If you are unwell, please phone your cancer centre to let them know
- If you are unwell with COVID-19 symptoms, please contact your doctor to discuss being tested for COVID-19.

It is safe to come to the hospital. If you are sick the hospital is still the safest place to be.

ALERT LEVEL 2 – REST OF NEW ZEALAND

At Level 2:

- Physical distancing guidelines will be in place
- Outpatient appointments may be in person or virtual (eg, phone conversation or video call), you will be contacted by your cancer centre with the details
- If you have treatment or a scan scheduled, please attend this as normal (unless you have been contacted by your cancer centre with alternative arrangements)
- If you have concerns about travelling or coming to hospital because of your health, please contact your cancer centre BEFORE your appointment or treatment
- If you are unwell, please phone your cancer centre to let them know.

Again it is still safe to come to the hospital. If you are sick the hospital is still the safest place to be.

Travelling to or from Auckland for cancer services

You can travel to or from Auckland for cancer services. You may be stopped at the boundary between Level 2 and 3, and asked why you are travelling. Carry your appointment letter with you or have the contact number for your cancer centre with you, so they can confirm your appointment.

Clinicians may also travel to or from Auckland to deliver cancer services. Carry your 'essential worker' letter and ID card with you if you are stopped at the boundary.

General COVID-19 information

Up-to-date information about [COVID-19 \(novel coronavirus\)](#) and all the information in this cancer services update is available on the [Ministry of Health's website](#).

These uncertain times can affect your mental wellbeing. It's important to remember that if you aren't feeling good, there is help available. Information and tools are available on the [Ministry of Health website](#).

People with reduced immunity, including some people living with cancer and those undergoing chemotherapy, are at a higher risk from COVID-19. Information on who is considered at risk and what can be done to manage that risk can be found on the [Ministry of Health website](#).

There are some simple steps to protect against COVID-19:

- Keep your distance from other people in public
- Wash your hands
- Sneeze and cough into your elbow
- Keep a track of where you have been and who you have seen
- Wear a mask if you can, especially where physical distancing is not possible, like on public transport or in shops
- If you are sick stay at home and call your cancer centre
- If you are sick with COVID-19 symptoms ring your doctor or Healthline.

Te Aho o Te Kahu is committed to working with clinicians, cancer centres, DHBs and our advisory groups to continue addressing the issues COVID-19 is creating for people living with cancer. Please keep safe and be kind.

Ngā mihi
Te Aho o Te Kahu