

Let's get ready for Omicron

While we are preparing, we thought it would be useful to share with you some 'Omicron preparation' tips.

You may be aware, that although Omicron appears less harmful than the previous Delta variant, it is many times more contagious and can still cause serious illness. Stopping the spread of the virus is therefore very difficult, but very important if everyone is to keep well. The following advice has been shared widely in countries with Omicron.

Vaccination boosters

Two doses of a COVID vaccine has proven effective against Delta, but it is proving not nearly as effective against Omicron. As soon as you are able, we encourage you to please get your booster shot.

Go to <https://bookmyvaccine.covid19.health.nz/> to make a booking, or visit a walk-in vaccination clinic. Most walk in clinics (such as your local pharmacy) will be able to give you a booster with a short wait.

Masks

Surgical masks (the blue disposable masks) or cloth masks are proving not as effective against the Omicron virus as only a small amount of the virus needs to be breathed in from the gaps around the mask for you to be infected. N95 (or K95) masks are more effective as they fit better around the face than surgical masks. If you are unable to find a N95 mask at the pharmacy, wearing a cloth mask over a surgical mask can help. A close fitted mask, that is worn correctly covering both your nose and mouth, provides much greater protection against Omicron.

Ventilation

Opening windows and doors when you are socialising with people can help stop the virus being passed along. Even better, socialising outside means your risk of contracting the virus can reduce significantly.

Hygiene

An early piece of advice with COVID-19 that is still important is hand hygiene. Washing our hands, cleaning surfaces, and using hand sanitiser are important ways to ensure you don't touch a surface that may have some of the virus on it and then pass it on to yourself.

Social distancing

Keeping your distance, along with the other protections above, can help stop the spread of the virus. Some of the distancing practices we had in place when COVID-19 first arrived will help stop the spread of Omicron – including no need for handshakes and keeping your distance from strangers.

The general guidance is to maintain a 2-metre physical distance from those you do not know and a 1-metre distance and wear a mask when you are in communal areas.

Food and medication

Make sure you have stocked up on any supplies to minimise outings that may be required.

Next steps

Right now, there is nothing more you can do except be prepared.

In an outbreak, we will be responding to keep our residents safe, which means also managing the impact of the virus on our team members. When our team members or their families are exposed to the virus, or they catch the virus, they are unable to come to work. A big part of our forward planning has been making sure our teams are prepared if the virus has a large impact on our village team.

If you have any questions, please phone or email the village manager or a member of the village team. You can also call your doctor, health provider or Healthline on 0800 358 5453 for advice. If you are having trouble breathing, call 111 immediately.

Useful information including updates can also be found on our website www.arvida.co.nz/covid-19