**Mass gatherings/events – NEW advice**

The Government has recently issued advice about when to cancel mass gatherings/events. This is an important aspect of our public health strategy to delay the onset of community transmission of COVID-19, and to limit the infection’s spread if community transmission occurs.

Cancelling mass gatherings can help slow the spread of COVID-​19 in New Zealand, reduce the number of people infected, and protect those who are more vulnerable to severe illness (such as our kaumātua and kuia). This framework will apply to non-essential gatherings (sporting events, music festivals, arts festivals and private events) and not to essential events (parliament, school, preschool, work, university).

Many groups including kapa haka groups, sports teams, whanau, hapu, iwi and Maori organisations and marae committees will need to work through how the cancellation framework impacts any upcoming events they are planning – including whanau reunions, hapū wananga, celebratory events like birthdays and weddings. It will disappointing to have to cancel planned events, but this public health emergency will come an end and we will get through this. However, for right now, it is about manaaki tangata and doing what’s right to protect our people.

For more information about when to cancel mass gatherings, please go to:  
<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-advice-public-events-and-mass-gatherings>

For those who sadly have tangihanga, we ask you to consider what variations to tikanga and kawa can be made to ensure manaaki tangata for all who attend. For example:

* What are alternatives to physical attendance? Can you utilise technology that allows social connection without physical connection?
* Consider sending whanau representatives, who go on behalf of the wider whanau, and especially those who are most vulnerable to COVID-19, such as koroua and unwell whanau
* If you are attending, please give advance notice to the haukainga at the marae so they know who will be attending and can prepare for your arrival
* As haukainga, make sure you have sufficient cleaning products and practice and promote hand hygeine
* If you are sick, please do not attend and please do not prepare or handle food intended for the tangi

**Māori tikanga and gatherings – UPDATED advice**

The situation has changed, and our Prime Minister’s address to our country yesterday highlights the need for all of us across Aotearoa, New Zealand to play our part to refrain from physical contact to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Physical contact is a way that COVID-19 can spread from person to person. We now have a strong need to vary our Māori tikanga and kawa to protect our whānau, hapū and iwi particularly those who are more vulnerable such as our kaumātua and kuia.

This includes no longer hongi, kissing on the cheek, harirū, hugging and other forms of physical contact.

Alternatives include, waving, smiling or other non-physical contact greetings.

We want to acknowledge there are some marae and iwi (such as Te Atiawa and Ngāti Kahungunu) who have made adjustments to their usual tikanga and kawa practices in response to COVID-19. We know our people will do the right thing to protect our whānau, hapū and iwi.

**Requirement for travelers arriving in New Zealand to self-isolate for 14 days**

For travelers who arrive after 1:00 am on Monday 16 March from any country except those listed on the [countries and areas of concern under Category 2](https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-health-advice-general-public/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-countries-and-areas-concern) you will need to self-isolate for 14 days. Cater

For more information, please see<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-advice-travellers>

and <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-health-advice-general-public/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-countries-and-areas-concern>

**Practical advice around self-isolation**

We understand there have been some questions around the practical aspects of self-isolation. We have provided some additional explanations around:

* Things you can do to make it easier in self-isolation
* Trying to separate yourself from people you live with
* Use of shared spaces if you live it others
* Don’t have visitors in your home
* Laundry
* Transport
* If you live with children or an older or vulnerable person
* If you are breastfeeding while staying at home
* Getting food and medicine.

In addition:

* We have updated our definition of close contact to match international definitions and the WHO. Close contact is now defined as within 2 meters for 15 minutes or more (previously this was 1 meter).
* Social distancing is now known as physical distancing – to avoid any confusion that those in self-isolation need to be socially detached when the opposite is true. Social engagement through non-physical contact is encouraged as part of looking after your mental wellbeing.

For more information about self-isolation, please see<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-health-advice-general-public/covid-19-staying-home-self-isolation>

**Important Public Health Messages to prevent the spread of COVID-19:**We know it can be a stressful time and there are concerns in our communities arising from mis-information. Our past lessons tell us we need to get our communication right and to go both far and wide with the same message. We know our people will do the right thing, but they need the right information at the right time to help them make these decisions.

Our key public health messages that can assist in preventing our whānau, hapū and iwi from contracting COVID-19, include:

• Mahia te hopi. Horoi ō ringa.

Wash your hands with soap and water often (for at least 20 seconds).

• Whakamātihetihe te ihu ki te tuke.

Cough or sneeze into your elbow or by covering your mouth and nose with tissues.

• Rauatu te aikiha ki te ipupara.

Put used tissues in the bin or a bag immediately.

• Mēnā ka paru ō ringa, kaua e pā te kānohi.

Don’t touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.

• Whakapūputu ai te patuero I ngā mea katoa. Hei tauira: Ngā kakau, ngā papa, ngā taputapu.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs.

• Mēnā ka māuiui koe, herea ki te kainga.  
Stay home if you feel unwell

The advice above is particularly to help us look after our most vulnerable such as our kaumātua, kuia and those compromised or with comorbidities (eg cardiovascular disease, diabetes or hypertension). We need to special take care of them in regard to COVID-19. One other thing to consider is ensuring they get the annual influenza vaccine as the last thing we want is for them to get both influenza and COVID-19.

**Please can you help:**

1. Ensure your team and provider networks know about these COVID-19 updates and where to go for further information.
2. Disseminate information through your local networks to ensure our whānau, hapū and iwi know the ***updated advice*** and how to keep themselves safe following good public health hygiene practices.
3. Ensure everyone knows the Ministry of Health website is the official communications forum for COVID-19 information: <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>