

## From Minister for Seniors, Tracey Martin



I hope you are all doing as well as you can in this restricted world we are living in.

Cabinet's decision to move to Level 3 next week will help get a lot more people back to work, but it still means that we all have to stay at home wherever possible and limit our physical contact with other people. I know that's tough, but we are doing it to stop the spread of COVID-19 and to reduce the risks to peoples' health and lives.

The last few weeks have been hard for everyone dealing with new ways of living and working and for some people and families they have been tragic. However, because of our efforts as individuals and as a nation, we have so far avoided the terrible tolls we are seeing in other developed countries.

Our progress to date has been based on some great Kiwi traits: caring for each other, a sense of commitment to and pride in our country, and some stoicism – our ability to look long term and put up with a bit of inconvenience. These things, coupled with some innovation have seen all sorts of new services and connections pop up. New food delivery businesses have emerged, groups like the Student Volunteer Army have re-emerged, and agencies like MSD and Civil Defence, even neighbours, have found new ways of reaching out and contacting people.

Please use these connections, as well as your personal ones, wherever you can. As a country we need to isolate this virus, but personally we need to keep talking to and caring for each other.

## 'Healthy for Life' new over 65-year olds programme



Hosted by Bernice Mene, **Healthy For Life** is designed to help older people work on their strength and balance through an exercise programme called the Super7.

All done from the comfort of your bubble, this show provides great tips for staying safe in the home, keeping your brain active, how to keep up your social links and friendships and advice about healthy eating and sleep during this time.

**Healthy For Life** screens on TVNZ 1, May 2 at 9AM and repeats Saturdays thereafter and is also available at TVNZ OnDemand.

### Maintaining core strength and balance is important

We know regular exercise is one of the best things you can do for yourself, and having core strength and balance keeps you active and steady on your feet, reducing the risk of a fall and keeping you confident and independent. Remember, when you're exercising at home it's important to wear comfortable clothes that you can move in, and flat comfortable shoes such as sneakers or a firm fitting flat-soled shoe.

### 'Live Stronger for Longer' resources are still available

There's a host of practical information and good old common-sense advice on [www.livestronger.org.nz](http://www.livestronger.org.nz) including resources that you can still download, share or order.

Just remember, while we are in lockdown, that delivery will take a little while longer than usual to reach you

## Moving to Alert Level 3

COVID-19 is a challenge like we have never seen before. We attacked the disease early and hard by going into Alert Level 4 – lockdown.

New Zealand is moving to Alert Level 3 at 11:59pm on Monday 27 April 2020. Under Alert Level 3 we will still have significant restrictions on our day-to-day lives. The risk of COVID-19 has diminished, but it has not gone away.

Older people and those with underlying medical conditions are at a higher-risk of severe illness. At Alert Level 3, you should still avoid the supermarket. Ask others to deliver your supermarket shop, or order online. Limiting our interactions with others will still be our best defence against COVID-19, so we should all continue to stay home as much as possible.

### Alert Level 3 means that:

- Public venues such as libraries, museums, cinemas, food courts, gyms, pools, playgrounds, markets will still be closed.
- Children should learn at home if possible, but Schools (years 1 to 10) and Early Childhood Education centres can safely open.
- Businesses can open for delivery and contactless pre-ordered pick up, but customers will not be able to enter stores.
- People must still work from home unless that is not possible.
- Gatherings of up to 10 people will be allowed but only for wedding services, funerals and tangihanga. Physical distancing and public health measures must be maintained.
- Healthcare services will use virtual, non-contact consultations where possible.
- Inter-regional travel will still be highly limited (e.g. for essential workers, with limited exemptions for others).

For more information on COVID-19 go to [www.covid19.govt.nz](http://www.covid19.govt.nz)

### Getting help from MSD:

While we're in Alert Level 3, walk in service centres will remain closed. MSD will continue to give you the help you need online and over the phone, as they have throughout Alert Level 4. Your regular payments will continue.

If you're struggling to meet your living costs, you can use MyMSD to apply online for help with things like one-off costs for food. If you are unable to get the help through MyMSD then you should call the contact centre.

If you need help you can:

- use MyMSD [www.my.msd.govt.nz](http://www.my.msd.govt.nz)
- Phone: [0800 552 002](tel:0800552002)



## Flu Vaccination

Contact your GP or pharmacist and make a plan to get your flu shot. Free flu shots are available now for people 65 and over, so you're protected before the main flu season hits.

At every Alert Level you can leave your house to get immunisations and medical treatment.

Although the flu vaccine won't protect you from COVID-19, it is a key component of the fight against COVID-19 by reducing pressure on the health system over winter.

The influenza immunisation is especially important for people aged 65 years and over. People over 65 experience up to 91 percent of flu-related deaths and around 70 percent of flu-related hospital stays.

For more information, talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist, check out [www.fightflu.co.nz](http://www.fightflu.co.nz) or call [0800 IMMUNE 0800 466 863](tel:0800466863).

Immunisation against shingles is also free for people turning 65. For more information, go to [www.health.govt.nz/immunisation](http://www.health.govt.nz/immunisation)



## Overseas during the COVID-19 pandemic

If you travelled overseas and are going to return to New Zealand within 30 weeks, your NZ Super or Veteran's Pension will continue for up to 26 weeks. Under a COVID-19 special assistance programme, if you left before 26 March 2020 and were intending to return to New Zealand, MSD is able to make your payments until you can return home.

If you've already been notified that your payments are continuing, you don't need to do anything except let MSD know if you're not intending to return to New Zealand or your circumstances change.

If you haven't been notified and your payments have stopped, MSD may be able to help. Visit their website [www.workandincome.govt.nz](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz) - there's a form available which helps MSD understand your situation. They may be able to re-start your payment.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade will want to know that you're safe and well. Check in with them by registering on their website [www.safetravel.govt.nz](http://www.safetravel.govt.nz)



## Your health and wellbeing

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 like a cough, fever, shortness of breath call your GP (doctor) or the COVID-19 Healthline [0800 358 5453](tel:08003585453)

If you cannot get through and are severely unwell, for example having trouble breathing, contact emergency services (dial [111](tel:111)).

For other health issues, you should still call your doctor as normal. Don't put this off because you are worried about leaving your home.

Minor health issues can become more serious if ignored and it is important that you have the treatments and medications you need.

Your Doctor will be able to give you guidance on whether you need to come in, some are doing over the phone and video consultations and they are all taking extra precautions to keep all patients safe.

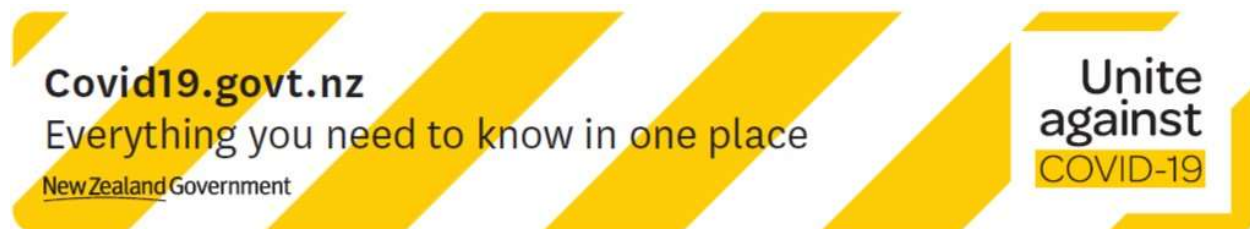


## Keep up to date

You can find out all the most recent information at the special website: [covid19.govt.nz](https://covid19.govt.nz) which is updated daily.

The Office for Seniors is working hard to keep you up to date and informed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please share this Newsletter with others. Forward it to your friends and make sure their email address is correct through their MYMSD account, so they receive our updates. If you know someone who doesn't have the internet you can read it out to them over the phone!



### Key telephone numbers

- COVID-19 Healthline [0800 358 5453](tel:08003585453)
- For general health issues, phone your doctor
- For emergencies dial [111](tel:111).
- If you are feeling anxious or just need someone to talk to [call](tel:08001737) or [text 1737](tel:08001737)
- Elder Abuse Helpline [0800 32 668 65](tel:08003266865)
- If you need to discuss your entitlements phone the MSD Senior Services line [0800 552 002](tel:0800552002)
- Money Talks free and confidential budgeting advice [0800 345 123](tel:0800345123)
- Make sure all your details are correct through your MyMSD Account at [www.my.msd.govt.nz](https://www.my.msd.govt.nz)
- If you're not sure what assistance may be available, don't know who to contact for help, call the free government helpline on [0800 779 997](tel:0800779997) (8am to 10pm, 7 days a week).
- For advice, support and general enquiries call [0800 22 66 57](tel:0800226657) 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday and 8am to 5pm, Saturday to Sunday.