

From Minister for Seniors Tracey Martin



Thanks to all of you for helping us get to Alert Level 3.

We haven't won the battle against COVID-19 yet, but overall New Zealand is doing well and that's thanks to everyone who has stuck by the rules and stuck in their bubbles. I know that our Seniors have been a big part of that.

Of course, Level 3 is about trying to get people back to work rather than changing our social lives - we're only one step through this and everyone's lives are going to be different for a while yet. What we have to do is very simple. If we keep physical distance from each other, the coronavirus can't spread. So if we keep doing what we're doing in another two weeks there's a good chance that more businesses will be able to open and we will be able to see a few more people.

In the meantime, please, don't stop talking to others - on the phone or computer - and please ask for help if you need it.

Alert Level 3 additional guidance

At Alert Level 3 the rules are very similar to Alert Level 4. Keep your 'bubble' small to reduce the risk of catching or spreading COVID-19.

Some of us are at more risk than others. Older people and those with health conditions are encouraged to stay home where possible. Food delivery services are available, and you can also ask friends or family to help get your groceries and essential supplies.

Over-70s and other higher-risk groups have the same rights as everyone else, they just need to be especially careful. If you need to leave home for groceries or other essential services, take additional precautions when leaving home.

Under Alert Level 3, seniors can:

- extend their 'bubble' carefully, for example by letting close family or a caregiver into their home
- go to a local beach or park for fresh air and exercise
- shop for essential services such as at the chemist or supermarket
- take children to school if they are caregivers, and
- volunteer or go to work if they cannot do this from home and it is safe

For more information, go to www.covid19.govt.nz

Services for Seniors

There have been a huge number of volunteers and organisations that are working hard to provide support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although we are not able to list off all of them, two that are doing great work to help older New Zealanders are the Student Volunteer Army and Age Concern New Zealand.

Message from the Student Volunteer Army

The Student Volunteer Army (SVA) has mobilised across Aotearoa/New Zealand to provide a grocery delivery service for people who are affected by the pandemic and resulting lockdown. The SVA has partnered with New World, Hyundai and Z Energy to deliver groceries for those who can't 'just pop to the shop'.



The process is simple: place an order online, or call us with a list and our friendly team will place an order for you. Pay for your groceries with a credit or debit card, and within 48 hours (but usually the next morning!) a screened, interviewed and trained volunteer will deliver your groceries to your door - completely contactless, which makes for a very safe service. Your local supermarket opens early just for us, meaning less contact with the public and a shiny clean store - and our partnerships with retirement villages are especially effective as a single volunteer delivers all of the orders for one location. Volunteers are vetted every day for health status and only participate if they are 100% healthy. We can cater for a variety of dietary requirements - but do let us know if there is something you'd like to see on the shop that isn't there!

Delivery is available nationwide - head to www.shop.sva.org.nz or call [0800 005 902](tel:0800005902) to place an order.



Message from Age Concern New Zealand

Age Concern New Zealand want to make sure all older people are supported through all alert levels of the Covid-19 pandemic. During a time of uncertainty and social distancing, it is normal to feel distressed and experience symptoms of stress. Age Concerns are here to help, so if you or someone you know needs support or advice please get in touch.

They are able to help people to get grocery and prescription deliveries, advice on bill payments and banking, join online social groups or exercise classes, have a friendly chat and anything else causing people to worry. They also have social workers who can help with free and confidential advice around elder abuse and neglect prevention.

"Please make sure that no one faces this time alone - reach out to your nearest Age Concern if you or someone you know needs help - we are here to help or point you to someone who can", says Age Concern New Zealand Chief Executive, Stephanie Clare.

"There will be an end to this pandemic but we urge people that this is not a time to sit in silence if you are worried about anything you should call us. Too often we hear of people not wanting to be a burden or make a fuss, please make a fuss! We have amazing staff and volunteers who can help direct you to the support or information you need."

Age Concerns are based in 40 locations across New Zealand and our teams are available to help with advice and support. You can find your nearest Age Concerns contact details on our website: www.ageconcern.org.nz or call for free on [0800 65 2 105](tel:0800652105).



Your Mental Health

If you are over 70-years-old and live alone, you will have been isolating at home since we entered Alert Level Two on 21 March 2020.

Being physically isolated for long periods of time may lead to feelings of loneliness and anxiety. If you are feeling this way, remind yourself that this is temporary. Staying at home will protect you, and it means that you are helping do your part to protect the community. You may have

experienced hard times before; you could think about the strengths that got you through these and how they could be applied at this time.

It's important to stay connected with friends and whānau via telephone, email, social media, or even on video call like Skype, Zoom or Facebook Messenger. Some of you might be missing your grandchildren - if they're young, one fun way to connect with them is to read a story over the phone, or let them practice their reading to you.

If you feel anxious or down please let someone you trust know – don't keep these feelings to yourself. Remember that it's okay to share your concerns with others you trust and in doing so you may end up providing support to them too. If you want to talk to a professional a good start may be your GP, or you can free call or text 1737 any time to talk to a trained counsellor.



For more information to support your mental wellbeing during COVID-19 go to www.depression.org.nz/olderpeople

Winter Energy Payment

The Winter Energy Payment starts again soon. If you get NZ Super or Veteran's Pension, you will be entitled to get the Winter Energy Payment from 1 May until 1 October. The payment is made automatically with your NZ Super or Veteran's Pension payment, you don't need to apply.

The payment is made to help with the cost of keeping the home warm and dry over winter, so you won't need to worry when you turn the heater on.

In response to COVID-19, the Government has announced that in 2020 the Winter Energy Payment will be doubled. Couples and people with dependent children will now get \$63.64 a week and single people will now get \$40.91 a week. As 1 May is a Friday, your first Winter Energy Payment on 12 May will be a part payment.

Opting out or back in

If you don't want to get the Winter Energy Payment, you can choose to opt out. You can opt out from through www.workandincome.govt.nz/winterenergypayment. If at any point during the payment period you change your mind, you can ask MSD to restart it.



Insulation and heater grants

Don't risk respiratory infections this winter by waiting until the first cold snap to think about warming up your home. There are Government grants available for insulation and efficient heaters.

For Community Services Card holders, the Warmer Kiwi Homes programme offers grants covering at least two-thirds of the cost of ceiling and underfloor insulation. Generous donations from community organisations makes the cost even lower in some areas.

If you have insulation, there are grants covering two-thirds of the cost of a heat pump for the main living area, with grants capped at \$2,500.

Finding out if you are eligible and applying for a grant is fast and easy. You can apply online using the Warmer Kiwi Homes tool www.energywise.govt.nz/tools/warmer-kiwi-homes-tool

Some residential areas throughout the country may also be eligible –even if you don't have a Community Services Card.

If you don't have online access, you can call [0800 749 782](tel:0800749782) and a Warmer Kiwi Homes team member will take your details. After you apply, you will be contacted by a service provider who will visit your home to make sure that insulation or a heater can be installed in your home. If

everything is approved by you and the service provider, arrange a day and time to have insulation or a heater installed.

The Warmer Kiwi Homes programme is run by EECA (Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority).



Food options

You are able to go to the supermarket, but it is safest to stay home. We know this might be difficult, lots of people look forward to their supermarket outings and it can sometimes be hard to plan ahead.

If you are just tired of the same old meals, at Alert Level 3 takeaways are available again, through contactless delivery.

Have you heard of food box delivery services? All the fresh ingredients and recipes come right to your door. [WOOP](#) and [My Food Bag](#) are offering discounts for SuperGold card holders through the [SuperGold website](#).

It's more important than ever to eat well to keep fit and healthy.

If you are struggling to access food because of the cost your local Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Group will still be working with food banks and other organisations and will be able to help.

You can also use MyMSD to apply online for one-off costs for food. If you are unable to use MyMSD then you should call the MSD Senior Services line [0800 552 002](#).

No matter what your situation is, there are options so you can get food straight to your door.



Your Health

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](#)

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

For other health issues, you should still call your doctor as normal. Doctors, medical centres and hospitals are still open at all alert levels.

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

Your doctor may offer you a consultation by text, email, phone or video. This is to stop person-to-person contact. If your doctor feels you need a consultation in person, they'll arrange this with you.



Keep up to date

You can find out all the most recent information at the special website: www.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. You can even read it out to them over the phone! There is an easily printable PDF version on our website www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz.

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 or text [1737](tel:1737)
- Elder Abuse Helpline [0800 32 668 65](tel:08003266865)
- Money Talks free and confidential budgeting advice [0800 345 123](tel:0800345123)
- If you need to discuss your entitlements phone the MSD Senior Services line [0800 552 002](tel:0800552002)
- Make sure all your details are correct through your MyMSD Account at www.my.msd.govt.nz
- If you are unable to find what you need online, and are not sure who to contact for help, call the free government helpline on [0800 779 997](tel:0800779997) or on [0800 22 66 57](tel:0800226657) (8am–1am, 7 days a week).

Disclaimer: The SuperGold Card programme enables independent businesses to offer discounts and benefits to older New Zealanders. The Ministry of Social Development is not associated with any seller and does not guarantee any representation made by a seller and any future dispute will need to be taken up with the seller not the Ministry of Social Development. Offers range in size and nature and cardholders should always check to see if a better offer is available locally.



New Zealand Government

