

COVID-19 Alert level 3

Information for Midwives: updated 30 April 2020

Medical certificates from midwives for pregnant women who are working during alert level 3

Under COVID-19 Alert level 3, essential services continue to operate and a number of businesses are able to reopen when they can do so safely. A number of midwives have had requests from their clients for medical certificates to enable them to stop work due to their concerns about being exposed to the virus at work.

Update 30.4.20: The Ministry of Health is updating its advice and removed pregnancy from the list of health conditions that indicate a person may be more at risk and vulnerable with relation to COVID-19. However, it is recommended that pregnant women over 28 weeks do not work in an environment where there is high risk of exposure to COVID-19. For midwives this would mean not providing care to women who are positive or suspect cases of COVID-19. In addition, pregnant women with underlying health conditions should also follow the guidance outlined for those people vulnerable to severe illness. <https://covid19.govt.nz/assets/resources/COVID-19-Guidance-at-Alert-Level-3-for-people-at-risk-of-severe-illness.pdf>

A midwife may provide a medical certificate stating the woman's gestation and whether she has any comorbidities if requested, but considerations about whether a pregnant woman stops work due to concerns about the potential for COVID-19 exposure are a matter for discussion between the employer and the employee.

Employers will have health and safety processes to assist in their considerations of who is at risk and how this risk can be mitigated. This does not always mean that vulnerable and at-risk workers need to stop work.

Pregnant women who are employed by DHBs can find information about their COVID-19 occupational health process on the [MERAS website](#). Employees are advised to talk to their line manager in the first instance and if required complete a vulnerable and at-risk worker self-assessment form. They can also contact their occupational health service for advice.

[Employment New Zealand](#) provides advice for other employers on health and safety in essential businesses which includes requirements for minimising the risk of COVID-19 transmission at work. The [Essential Workers Leave Scheme](#) supports eligible businesses to enable workers who meet the criteria to take leave during this time if this is required because of the nature of the essential work. This is not available to those employed by the wider State Sector, including DHBs, who are covered by provisions of the State Services Commission.