

COVID-19 Alert levels 3 and 4

Information for midwives: 22 April 2020

Midwives and COVID-19 testing

The College has been answering calls about the implications for midwives who are being tested for COVID-19 throughout the pandemic response. In order to inform our discussions with midwives on what should happen while they were awaiting results and plans for a positive result, we have had a number of discussions with the Ministry of Health and kept up to date with the case definition, the definition of 'close contact' and the contact tracing process.

Like everyone, a midwife who is being tested should be in self-isolation/self-quarantine until results are available.

- If the midwife has been contact traced by the public health unit as a close contact of a confirmed or probable case, she will remain in quarantine for the full 14 days from potential exposure, regardless of the test result (if she is tested).
- If the midwife has been referred or self-referred for testing due to symptoms and the test is negative, in general she returns to work once she is well. This would be on the advice of her GP or public health unit, or DHB if she is employed.
- While awaiting test results, core midwives need to advise their line manager. LMC midwives need to organise cover for their caseload – contact the MMPO Locum Service.
- If the result is positive:
 - the public health unit would contact trace anyone who was a close contact during her infectious period, which the case definition defines as 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms. This means that only close contacts from up to two days prior to symptom onset would need to be contacted, not all women seen in the previous 14 days.
 - 'Close contact' is [defined by the Ministry of Health](#) and includes 'face-to-face contact in any setting within two metres of a case for 15 minutes or more'. Midwives who are practising according to recommendations to keep their physical contact to a minimum and keep it less than 15 minutes, remaining >2m away unless needing to physically touch the woman, and [using PPE as the Ministry of Health has advised](#) should therefore have very few clients who qualify as genuine close contacts.

Midwives are avoiding physical contact with their practice colleagues unless they are at a home birth together, in which case they practice physical distancing as they are able and wear appropriate PPE according to the situation.

The MMPO locum service covers the midwife for her required self-quarantine and also if she is at all unwell, in which case she is recommended not to go to work.