

## COVID-19 Alert level 2

### Frequently Asked Questions for Community Midwives: updated 20 May 2020

**This information is subject to change according to Ministry of Health updates.**

## General Information

### How does COVID-19 alert level 2 differ from levels 3 & 4 for my community midwifery work? (Updated 20 May 2020)

The move to alert level 2 was made because the data indicates that the risk of community transmission of the virus has significantly decreased. As a result, the country is moving back towards a “safer version of normal” which means no longer having to maintain discrete bubbles and more businesses and public venues can reopen. In the same way, community midwives can begin to transition to a more normal way of working, which includes returning to your standard frequency of midwifery appointments and increasing the amount of in-person care you provide. For more practical advice on this, see [College advice on community midwifery care at alert level 2](#).

It is still important to maintain COVID-19 infection prevention and control practices, including meticulous hand hygiene and more frequent cleaning of high-touch surfaces. Midwives need to continue [screening women for COVID-19 symptoms](#) prior to appointments.

COVID 19 alert level 2 requires everyone to ensure physical distancing when accessing services. During appointments, maintain a physical distance of at least 1m except when undertaking direct physical assessment.

### How should I prioritise my appointment schedule during COVID 19 alert level 2? (New 20 May 2020)

Because access to health services was affected during the lockdown period, some women may not have received the assessments and investigations that are routinely and/or clinically recommended. The College has provided guidance on considering the effects of the lockdown on health equity and how to prioritise midwifery care to ensure that existing health outcome inequity is not compounded by the lockdown. See the [College advice on community midwifery care at alert level 2](#).

### What are the COVID-19 screening questions under alert level 2? (Updated 20 May 2020)

See the Ministry of Health document: [Alert Level 2: Risk assessment questions if COVID-19 status is unknown](#).

### How do I keep myself and my family safe whilst working as a midwife during COVID-19 alert level 2? (Updated 20 May 2020)

You will need to continue to ensure physical distancing is maintained during appointments except when you need to undertake a direct physical assessment. Good handwashing remains essential

before and after any physical care that you undertake. Disinfect all work surfaces and equipment between care provision.

For women who have suspected or confirmed COVID-19 (including women who have any COVID-19 symptoms) defer the appointment if this is clinically safe. If a physical assessment is required, discuss the woman's required care with the hospital team. These situations need to be considered on a case-by-case basis and may occur at home or the DHB, according to the plan made in collaboration with the hospital team. Follow the [Ministry of Health PPE guidance](#).

The Health Quality and Safety Commission has produced [information on keeping your home bubble safe](#) as a health professional.

### [Will the changes in care provision impact my ability to claim under section 88 service specifications? \(updated 20 May 2020\)](#)

Under alert level 2, the Ministry of Health will continue to pay midwifery claims for labour and birth care when a handover to the DHB has been required due to COVID-19, or when usual antenatal/postnatal care has not been possible due to COVID-19. Follow instructions on the MoH website under the heading: [Claiming for COVID-19 related transfers of care](#).

### [Should I undertake early postnatal visits to women who are receiving inpatient postnatal care at a maternity facility? \(updated 20 May 2020\)](#)

Under level 2, it is anticipated that care will begin to transition back towards normal practice. If the woman is having a postnatal stay in a maternity facility, discuss the situation with the maternity team about whether you or the DHB midwives will provide usual LMC inpatient postnatal assessments. It is important that women who discharge home shortly after birth receive early postnatal visits at home.

### [What personal protective equipment \(PPE\) should I wear when providing midwifery care?](#)

See the [Ministry of Health website](#) for information on PPE for maternity care providers.

### [How do I access personal protective equipment \(PPE\)?](#)

Your DHB will supply you with PPE. Discuss with your regional College chairperson if you are having difficulties obtaining PPE.

### [I have been unable to access PPE and need to provide midwifery care to a woman who is unwell. What do I do?](#)

Midwives are not expected to do any visit that requires PPE (according to the Ministry's advice) if they cannot access PPE from the DHB. If PPE is unobtainable, care may need to be provided in a DHB facility where PPE is available.

### How is ultrasound pregnancy scan availability affected by alert level 2? (Updated 20 May 2020)

Ultrasound scanning is an essential health service, and providers who restricted services during alert levels 4 and 3 are likely to return to usual availability. The Ministry of Health has produced [Information for radiologists on community-based maternity ultrasounds at Alert Level 2](#). It remains important to ensure only clinically required scans are undertaken, especially as demand for ultrasound scans may increase where they have been less available under lockdown.

### Are there any changes to services providing blood tests and other investigations for women that require them at alert level 2? (Updated 20 May 2020)

Laboratory services are an essential health service and where some blood test centres reduced access under alert levels 4 and 3, this should begin to return to usual availability. Routine investigations (eg. gestational diabetes screening/testing) should take place as recommended in standard practice. We would advise you to contact your regional chairperson if you have any issues with laboratory service availability in your region.

### How do I organise prescriptions for women who require them? (Updated 20 May 2020)

The pharmacy guild had requested that prescriptions are faxed to them and women asked to contact the pharmacy prior to visiting to make sure that their prescriptions are ready. The [MMPO's business app 'Tiaki'](#), which is available to all College members, has a facility for sending prescriptions electronically which are approved for the COVID-19 response period. Contact the MMPO for more information.