

# TE ARAWA

## COVID-19

### RESPONSE

## Managed Isolation FAQ's

We are aware that whānau may have questions about the managed isolation sites in Rotorua, the health and safety protocols that are being followed, and how we can keep our community safe. Below are some questions and answers you may find useful.

### **What is the difference between managed isolation and quarantine?**

Managed isolation is where people returning to New Zealand from overseas, but who do not have any COVID-19 symptoms, stay for the 14 day period while they are tested and ensure they don't have the virus. It is effectively a precautionary measure to protect New Zealanders from COVID-19 transmission.

Quarantine is for those who have or are at higher risk of infection of COVID-19 and has additional restrictions, including on the ability to go outside for fresh air or exercise. These are in a different location or area to managed isolation and people stay in quarantine for at least 14 days and must also be clear of symptoms for 48 hours before being released.

We have three managed isolation facilities in Rotorua - the Rydges, Sudima and Ibis Hotels. There are no quarantine facilities in Rotorua. Returnees who test positive for COVID-19 while in managed isolation are transferred to quarantine facilities in Auckland.

People in a quarantine facility are those who:

- have been diagnosed with COVID-19
- have COVID-19 symptoms; or
- have been in close contact with someone with suspected, probable or confirmed COVID-19 in the last 14 days.

The key difference between who goes into a quarantine facility or a managed isolation facility is determined by a health assessment (including COVID-19 testing) either on arrival in New Zealand or while in managed isolation.

### **What happens if someone in managed isolation becomes unwell?**

All people in managed isolation receive regular health checks during their stay. This is a vital process for individual wellbeing. If somebody starts feeling unwell, for example developing symptoms of fever, a cough, difficulty breathing, or sore throat, a health professional will make an assessment and if appropriate the individual will be transferred to a quarantine facility or area. If they have a different illness, they can get all the medical support they need.

### **Can returnees choose the city or facility to isolate in?**

No. You will not be able to choose where you will stay. Passengers on the same flight are typically allocated to the same managed isolation facility, except those assessed as having a higher risk of COVID-19 who will enter quarantine.

### **Do iwi have a say in these decisions?**

While Iwi do not have a direct say in these decisions, we do acknowledge the expertise and specialists intervention that is required to manage this operation. We are pleased, however, that the lines of communication are open so that we can support and advise where necessary. We have been provided assurances that safety processes are stringently followed and maintained throughout the isolation and quarantine period and two of our koeke have weekly hui with two MIF team

**I've seen negative feedback on social media, are people in isolation treated well and kept informed?**

The government is doing everything it can to keep people informed, safe and well during their stay. On arrival, guests are provided with a Welcome Pack with what to expect during their stay. Guests are provided with three meals a day, wifi and basic toiletries and refreshments.

New Zealanders made considerable sacrifices during Alert Levels 3 and 4 to get to where we are today. So the same is being asked of returnees during their 14 day stay, to ensure they can return safely to their family and friends.

Everyone will respond differently – some may find it harder than others. It's important for people to look after their mental health, as well as their physical health. There are health professionals at every facility, who are there to care for returnees – and people are encouraged to use online mental health resources or text Telehealth on 1737 if they need support.

**Are we expecting more arrivals or to use more hotels in Rotorua?**

The number of New Zealanders returning home is expected to remain steady. Managed isolation facilities, including those in Rotorua, will continue to be needed. The exact location and number needed may change over time. We have been assured that we will be kept informed as the situation develops and we are working closely with the agencies involved.

**How were the hotels selected?**

All hotels selected for managed isolation or quarantine need to meet a strict set of criteria to ensure people staying and working in them are kept safe, and that there's a safe transition for people back into the community after their isolation period.

Some of the criteria hotels must meet include general requirements (such as security and entry/exit points), suitable room and bathroom facilities, adequate provision of food and drink delivered to rooms, safe laundry protocols, and the ability to ensure peoples wellbeing through the provision of online access and services.

**Are the hotels still open to guests who are not in managed isolation?**

No, none of the hotels being used for quarantine or managed isolation are currently open to other guests.

**What protocols are in place to keep the Rotorua community safe from COVID-19 should a case be confirmed in one of the hotels?**

The purpose of managed isolation is to ensure people do not have COVID-19 before they return to our communities. People are tested around day three and day 12 of their stay, and they must test negative before they can leave managed isolation. If a

potential case is identified in an isolation facility, that person and any close or casual contacts are immediately isolated and transferred to a quarantine facility in Auckland.

All people in managed isolation receive regular health checks during their stay. This is a vital process for individual wellbeing. If somebody starts feeling unwell a health professional will make an assessment and if appropriate, the individual will be transferred to a quarantine facility.

People working in the facility follow strict health and safety measures to stop the spread of COVID-19. As part of the government's COVID-19 vaccination rollout, MIQ frontline workers along with their families were amongst the first to get their vaccination to help stop the spread of the virus.

**Are the people in managed isolation being tested for COVID-19? If so, how often and who is doing the testing?**

People in managed isolation are being tested by on-site health professionals around days three and 12, and a negative result is needed for the day-12 test before people are allowed to leave.

**Are they allowed out of their rooms to exercise? If so, where do they go?**

In managed isolation people are allowed to leave their hotel room for exercise – each location has developed specific rules which are closely managed by the team on site at each hotel.

**Are they allowed out of their rooms for other areas? I.e. To socialise with other manuhiri in managed isolation?**

Movement outside rooms is allowed but with strict control. People are asked to only interact with people in their 'bubble' and to stay two metres away from other returnees. They are not allowed to leave the hotel.

**What measures are in place to stop potential spread between those within the managed isolation facilities?**

People are closely supervised during their stay and are asked to only interact with people in their 'bubble' and stay two metres away from other returnees.

Regular health checks throughout the stay are provided and food and drink is delivered directly to rooms.

The hotel is thoroughly and regularly cleaned, particularly in common/high touch areas and all guests are asked to follow public health measures during their stay including:

- Washing hands with soap and water often (for at least 20 seconds) and dry thoroughly, or use hand sanitiser.
- Keep a distance of 2 metres from other people, other than those in their 'bubble'.
- Cough or sneeze into their elbow or cover the mouth and nose with tissues and disposing immediately in a rubbish bin.

- Avoid touching the face, including eyes, nose, and mouth as surfaces may have infectious droplets.

### **Are manuhiri in managed isolation allowed visitors?**

No. Friends or whānau are not allowed to visit those in managed isolation. Items can be dropped off in a contactless way if deemed necessary, although this isn't encouraged. In those cases, the hotel or site teams will facilitate this.

People are encouraged to use other communication methods such as making phone calls or using apps like Zoom, SKYPE, etc to keep in contact with family and friends. Wi-Fi in facilities is free of charge.

### **What security is in place to ensure the people in managed isolation are following the rules?**

Security in the facilities is provided by Security staff with a Police and New Zealand Defence Force presence on each site.

### **Who can I contact for more information on this process?**

Visit the [covid19.govt.nz](https://www.covid19.govt.nz) website or the Ministry of Health website: [health.govt.nz](https://www.health.govt.nz)

You can also read the 'Welcome Pack' [here](#).

Check out this [article](#) which features interviews with three locals who each have a different role within the managed isolation facilities in Rotorua.

### **Who can I contact if I am concerned about how this process is being carried out or if I think there has been a breach in process?**

Together we're uniting against COVID-19. If you're concerned about a breach of the rules, you can report it to the COVID-19 Compliance Centre. If you believe someone isn't sticking to the rules, you can report it. This includes if you know of someone who is not complying with isolation requirements.

You can find out how to make a report on the Police website:

<https://www.police.govt.nz/105support>

### **We have heard that people from managed isolation have been out shopping in local supermarkets etc – could this be the case?**

No. People are closely supervised during their stay and cannot leave the facility. Movement outside rooms is allowed only in a strictly controlled manner.

You may see staff in the community who work at managed isolation facilities. These people are following all public health guidance. It is safe to be out and about in the community as normal.

### **Can someone be exempt from managed isolation?**

A very small number of people will be eligible for exemption from managed isolation, such as medical transfers, and those with serious medical conditions that cannot be managed in the accommodation provided. The process for applying for an exemptions to managed isolation is located on the COVID-19 website.

Exemptions can be considered for:

- **A minor who is travelling alone** – This allows a parent or care giver to join the minor in managed isolation, not for the minor to leave self-isolation.

- **Individuals arriving as medical transfers** - If being transferred to hospital, a letter from the DHB verifying they will enable self-isolation in hospital or if discharged within 14 days, they will be required to complete the time in a managed isolation facility.

- **Individuals with physical or other needs that cannot be appropriately accommodated at the managed facilities** - Applications in this category need to be supported with clinical evidence from a registered medical practitioner. Needs considered are the needs of the individual arriving in New Zealand, not of others already in New Zealand.

- **Workers critical to the COVID-19 response required to undertake tasks during the 14 days isolation** - Applications in this category need to be supported by a letter from a relevant government department, essential service employer or lifeline utility.

#### **What are the cleaning arrangements for the buses that are transporting the new arrivals?**

The buses undergo thorough cleaning after every trip. All hard surfaces in buses are wiped down and disinfected at the end of each shift.

As part of Group 1 and 2, bus drivers have also had the COVID-19 vaccination as they are frontline workers in high risk areas.

#### **What is the process around driver safety for the bus drivers taking passengers to hotels, particularly when they are driving out of town?**

Bus drivers practice strict personal hygiene and maintain a safe physical distance from passengers at all times.

The transfer of guests from airports to hotels is carried out by a professional transport company. All driving is undertaken by their team of professional bus drivers, who are following all public health measures.