

National Screening Programmes at Alert Level 3: Primary Care Information

24 April 2020

The move to Government COVID-19 Alert Level 3 will allow us to gradually resume national breast and cervical screening programmes, however bowel screening will not resume at this time. To support primary care providers with this change please find further information below:

Important information for all screening programmes at Alert Level 3

- Refer to guidance on the use of PPE on the Ministry of Health website:
<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-novel-coronavirus-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-advice-essential-workers-including-personal-protective-equipment/personal-protective-equipment-use-health-care>
- To help minimise delays, screening for COVID-19 symptoms should be undertaken *prior to* face-to-face appointments being undertaken.

<p>Breast Screen Aotearoa</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All participants who were waiting for assessment during Government Alert Level 4 are offered assessment Breast screening will resume at reduced capacity. Priority women and those who missed their appointment at Alert Level 4 will be first to receive a screening appointment, except those with existing medical conditions Participants with a high likelihood of invasive cancer will be offered assessment and will be referred for treatment. Those with a low likelihood of invasive cancer will be offered assessment as capacity allows
<p>National Cervical Screening Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Routine cervical screening will begin to resume for eligible women. For those who are 70 + or with existing medical conditions, the decision to screen will be made on a case-by-case basis Providers are to continue to invite, see and follow-up all screening participants with previously identified cervical abnormalities on cytology or histology. In the first instance, priority should be given to annual surveillance rescreens, overdue screens, and priority populations Where capacity allows providers can invite new eligible women and those due for their 3 yearly repeat screening Screening support services can assist with engaging priority populations Continued triage/ assessment of patients with symptoms of abnormal bleeding More detailed information will be provided to primary care about cervical screening and also on the guideline changes due to be published.
<p>National Bowel Screening Programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bowel screening will not resume under Government Alert Level 3 (this decision will be reviewed monthly) No new invitations or two-yearly recall invitations will be issued Colonoscopies for urgent referrals will continue to be prioritised by DHBs Screening colonoscopies for positive referrals will resume as soon as feasible Participants are being advised to delay completing screening test kits until at Government Alert Level 2 GPs to continue contacting participants with a positive result (virtual contact is appropriate unless face to face assessment deemed important by clinician)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For participants with a positive result and symptoms suggestive of bowel cancer, GPs are to examine patient as clinically indicated and advise on the referral form - Participants with a positive result who are now experiencing symptoms are being advised to contact their GP for assessment
Antenatal & Newborn Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All programmes will continue to operate under Alert Level 3, with changes to ensure safety of staff and mothers and their babies - Newborn hearing screening will be provided only for hospital births and prioritised outpatient cases - Diagnostic audiology will be provided for acute and prioritised cases only

Information for health professionals will also be accessible via the National Screening Unit website COVID-19 webpage at <https://www.nsu.govt.nz/health-professionals/covid-19-information-screening-providers>.

Information for participants about cancer screening programmes will be available at www.timetoscreen.nz and for antenatal and newborn screening programmes at www.nsu.govt.nz

Thank you in advance for sharing this information with all staff, colleagues and networks.

If you have any questions about this communication, please contact Stephanie Chapman on 021 881 035 or stephanie.chapman@health.govt.nz.

Finally, thank you for all that you and your team are doing to manage this rapidly changing situation.

Ngā mihi nui

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