

New Zealand to stay at Orange as winter continues

09 Aug 2022

New Zealand will remain at the Orange traffic light setting, while hospitalisations remain elevated and pressure on the health system continues through winter.

There is still significant pressure on hospitals from winter illnesses, so our current measures have an ongoing role to play in reducing the number of COVID-19 cases and hospitalisations.

The health system usually sees elevated pressure through September, so we would be hoping to see some sustained reductions in both cases and hospitalisations then.

The good news is current modelling suggests COVID-19 cases may have peaked at around 11,000 cases per day mid-July. However, due to the current high levels of COVID-19 infection in the community, the corresponding burden on primary and hospital care systems and the highest levels of mortality seen in the outbreak so far, the COVID-19 Protection Framework setting has been kept the same.

Remaining at Orange gives our health system the level of support needed to prevent a surge in demand for care.

Maintaining our Orange setting a while longer supports the winter package of measures announced earlier in July, which included easier access to RATs and masks, expanded eligibility for antivirals and easier access to them for eligible people, and availability of the second booster to all people over 50.

Our response to Omicron is moving in the right direction, but loosening settings before we are completely on top of it risk infections going up again. We just need to stay the course a little longer.

There will be no changes to case isolation and household contact quarantine requirements. The next review setting will be in September.

Under Orange, you are required to wear a mask in most indoor settings. You can visit cafes and bars, attend gatherings and events, and go to gyms and hairdressers — with no capacity limits or distancing requirements.

[Life at Orange](#)

