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# New Zealand moves to Orange in time for Easter

**HON CHRIS HIPKINS**(/MINISTER/HON-CHRIS-HIPKINS)

COVID-19 Response (/portfolio/labour-2020-2023/covid-19-response)

Kiwis will be able to enjoy the long weekend with greater freedoms across the country from 11:59pm on Wednesday as New Zealand moves to Orange, COVID-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins announced today.

"The revised COVID-19 Protection Framework we introduced three weeks ago has effectively managed the Omicron outbreak at Red," Chris Hipkins said.

"Over the past few weeks we've seen a sustained reduction in cases and hospitalisations despite the relaxation of settings, so we're confident a move to Orange can lock in those gains while helping the country return to a greater degree of normality.

Under Orange there are no indoor capacity limits and the seated and separated rule for hospitality venues lifts, so bars, cafes and restaurants are able to fill up again.

"Wearing a face mask at Orange is still important, especially with capacity limits removed. People are required to wear a face mask in many indoor settings. Next to being vaccinated and having a booster, face masks are our main defence against COVID-19 at Orange.

"We know this shift down to Orange will be welcome news to many as we head into Easter weekend and the school holidays and connect with loved ones.

"But there is still Omicron in the community, and the threat of new variants arriving here is still risk, so I urge everyone to continue to be cautious and think about the health of others, especially those who are immunocompromised or at higher risk of long-term health impacts from infection.

"It's also important to make a plan in case you get COVID-19 on holiday. If you're not using your own vehicle to travel – such as being reliant on airplane or public transport - you need to make sure you can isolate where you are," Chris Hipkins said.