

April 15th 2020



What is the chance my patient has COVID-19?

The numbers of people newly diagnosed with COVID-19 in NZ has been falling over the last week while the number of people recovering has increased so that half of all cases have now recovered. This is as a result of the national Level 4 response or 'lockdown'.

This has led to a reduction in the number of patients with 'active' disease ie. those that remain infectious.

In Counties Manukau the number of active (infectious) cases has fallen and the vast majority of these cases are linked to overseas travel or contact with a confirmed or probable COVID case. From the epidemiology data it is estimated that for a person with none of the risk factors above the chance that they have COVID-19 is <1 in 100 000.

This is before any questioning of the patient regarding symptoms. If the patient is asymptomatic it would reduce the risk even further.

Relevance for clinic appointments, procedures and surgery as NZ moves out of Level 4

The DHB plans to emerge with the rest of the country from the level 4 community restrictions in a week or so.

Questions that can be used to screen patients to ensure risk is minimized are:

1. Have you been overseas in the last 14 days?
2. Have you been in contact with a confirmed or probable COVID patient in the last 14 days?
3. Are you unwell and are any of the people in your household bubble unwell with fever or acute (new) respiratory symptoms?

If the answer to ALL these questions is NO then it is safe to proceed as normal with the clinic, procedure or surgery.

If the answer to any is YES postpone the patient, if possible, for 14 days. If the person is acute they should, of course, be seen and appropriate infection control precautions taken informed by the above risk-assessment questions. If the answer to the third question is YES the patient should be advised to have a COVID-19 swab test.

What is the chance a patient has COVID-19?

Questions for screening ALL patients:

- In the last 14 days have you been overseas?
- In the last 14 days have you been in contact with a person who has confirmed/probable COVID illness?
- Are you unwell or are any of the people in your household bubble unwell with fever or acute (new) respiratory symptoms?

If the answer to all these questions is NO
it is highly unlikely (<1:100,000 chance)
that the patient has COVID-19.
It is safe to proceed with standard precautions.



If the answer to any is YES
Then consider deferring direct patient contact
OR
Proceed wearing the **appropriate PPE**

