

# BOP HEALTH COVID-19 RESPONSE ▶

17 April 2020  
Issue No. 3

## Your GP is still open for business

Do you have any health concerns you would usually see your family doctor about? Get in touch with your doctor as normal, irrespective of the lockdown. That's the message coming from Bay of Plenty and Lakes DHB GPs.

Local GPs and health organisations are strongly urging people to get in touch with their family doctor and health service providers with any health issues as they usually would.

"It is concerning if people are holding back from making contact with their doctor about health matters, which could result in conditions worsening," said Western Bay of Plenty Primary Health Organisation's General Manager of Practice Services Phil Back.

"Practices are open, offering normal services and available to deal with all health issues," added Ngā Mataapunga Oranga PHO Clinical Performance Manager Carliza Patuawa. "We need to be looking after ourselves through this

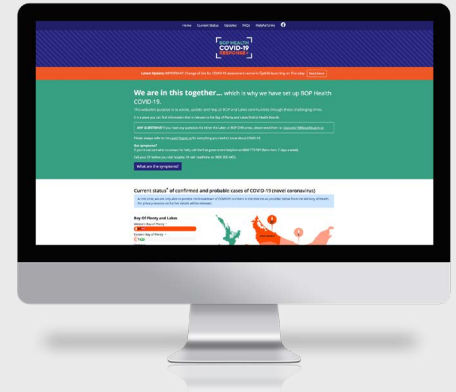
lockdown and beyond, so putting off calling the doctor isn't the answer."

Some practices were now calling patients they know to have chronic health conditions to ensure they were doing okay said Eastern Bay Primary Health Association Clinical Director Rachel Shouler.

Practices are operating based on advice and health guidelines designed to keep patients safe. All are asking patients to get in touch by phone in the first instance so that doctors can triage cases. Next steps are then advised.

People are being urged to apply for a Community Services Card from Work and Income if their financial circumstances have changed, such as loss of income.

Click here to find out more about the Community Services Card: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/community-services-card.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/products/a-z-benefits/community-services-card.html)



**BOP HEALTH has created a new website to help address any COVID-19 questions.**

The website has the latest health updates relating to COVID-19, plus answers to frequently asked questions. You can find it at: **[covid19.bopdhb.govt.nz](http://covid19.bopdhb.govt.nz)**.

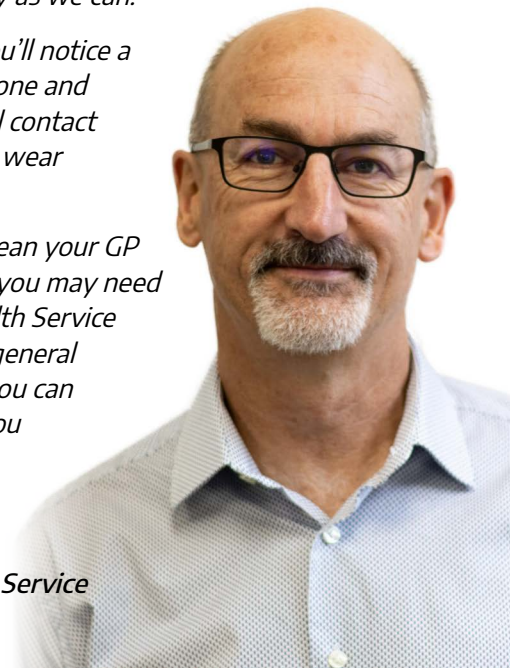
Enquiries to the BOP HEALTH COVID-19 response team can be emailed to: **[bopcovid19@bopdhb.govt.nz](mailto:bopcovid19@bopdhb.govt.nz)**

*It's still very important you see your GP for normal medical care and during this level of high risk we need to keep you as healthy as we can.*

*General Practice services have changed, you'll notice a lot of history taking can be done by telephone and unfortunately we have to limit the physical contact we have with our patients and we have to wear appropriate protective gear for that.*

*Just because of these changes it doesn't mean your GP is not available or able to provide any care you may need at this time. At Rotorua Area Primary Health Service we've been trying very hard to keep your general practice as a safe place for you to visit so you can attend to the normal medical issues that you may have.*

**Dr Mike Williams**  
*Chair of the Rotorua Area Primary Health Service*



**A decision to move to Alert Level 3 has not been made and we remain at Alert Level 4**

**STAY HOME  
SAVE LIVES**

# Update on COVID-19 assessment centres

## ROTORUA/TAUPŌ

If you have COVID-19 symptoms and think you need to be tested please phone the Lakes Covid Assessment line 0800 267 847 to book a test.

Wait for advice for where and when to go for your assessment.

**Please note** - testing in Lakes DHB is not by self-referral or drop-in. Tests are by appointment only.

The Bay's COVID-19 assessment centres have new opening and closing times.

These can be found here: **covid19.**

**bopdhb.govt.nz/assessment-centres**

Assessment centres in the Western Bay of Plenty areas are at:

- Trustpower Baypark Stadium
- Whakatāne (at Whakatāne War

Memorial Hall)

- Ōpōtiki (at Ōpōtiki Senior Citizens Hall)
- Kawerau (at the Ron Hardie Recreation Centre Car Park)

Pop-up drive-through assessment clinics are continuing throughout the Eastern Bay of Plenty.

## Tūhoe (in partnership with Ngai Tūhoe)

**Rūātōki:** Wed 22 April  
Ohutu Marae - 10am-2pm

**Waikaremoana:** Fri 24 April  
Waikaremoana Clubrooms - 10am-2pm

**Ruatāhuna:** Wed 29 April  
Te Tii Hub, Ruatāhuna - 10am-2pm

These clinics ensure anyone with COVID-19 symptoms can access services

without travel barriers.

The mobile pop ups provide a kaupapa Māori mobile service to ensure small and rural communities have accessible COVID-19 assessment. Drive-throughs have been set up by Te Puna Ora o Mataatua (TPOOM) and Eastern Bay PHA (EBPHA) with support from Bay of Plenty District Health Board (BOPDHB), in collaboration with local iwi in each area. The process will assess, test (if needed) and manage people with potential COVID-19 symptoms while minimising risk of transmission and ensuring wrap around services are also offered.

With future clinic times subject to change, in response to the healthcare needs of the community, ongoing dates for all COVID-19 assessment clinic services will be kept up-to-date at **www.tpoom.co.nz**

# Flu Vaccines

The Government has extended till April 27 the amount of time priority groups have to get their flu vaccine before it is made available to the wider public.

Although the influenza vaccine DOES NOT protect against COVID-19, getting your flu shot will help prevent a serious illness that places significant pressure on healthcare services each winter in New Zealand.

Free flu vaccines are available now from a range of health providers including GPs, selected pharmacies and Māori health providers for priority groups including:

- **Pregnant women (any time during pregnancy)**
- **People aged 65 years or older**
- **People aged under 65 years with diabetes, most heart or lung conditions and some other illnesses**
- **Children aged 4 years or under who have had a stay in hospital for**

**measles, asthma or other breathing problems**

- **Healthcare and other frontline workers, which includes emergency services, social services, police, defence, and border control but not supermarket workers**

For more information, talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist, or call 0800 466 863

BOPDHB Immunisation Coordinator Shelley McIntosh says "We have already seen a much higher uptake of flu vaccine this year. A further supply of vaccines has arrived in the region and is currently in the process of being distributed to GPs and pharmacies. If you are pregnant, over 65 or have health issues that put you at risk and haven't had your flu shot yet, get in touch with your doctor or pharmacist now."

**www.fightflu.co.nz**



*The Korowai Aroha Health Centre's first drive-thru flu vaccination clinic got underway in Rotorua this week at the Taharangi Marae. The initiative is part of a big push to get those over 65 vaccinated before the onset of winter.*





*COVID-19 behind the scenes - Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi nursing students Jessie-Lee Tuari-Hape, Chelsea Aim-Linstead and Andre Aramoana help out at the Whakatāne CBAC.*

## Taking 'work experience' to a new level

Three second year nursing students from Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi are getting work experience beyond expectations on the front line of the Whakatāne drive through COVID-19 Community Based Assessment Centre (CBAC).

Andre Aramoana and Jessie-Lee Tuari-Hape from Kutarere and their class mate Chelsea Aim-Linstead from Ōpōtiki were approached by a friend who works at the Eastern Bay Primary Health Alliance (EBPHA) to lend a hand at the Whakatāne CBAC at the War Memorial Hall, and leapt at the chance.

"We're blessed to have this opportunity and totally soaking up this experience," says Andre who along with his sister is fluent in Te Reo Māori.

The CBAC, operated by Te Puna Ora o Mataatua and EBPHA with support from the Bay of Plenty District Health Board, opens and closes each day with a karakia. The kaupapa Māori approach is one that the students really value.

While the students don't have the expertise to give clinical advice, they are a calming influence.

"Some people pull up in tears; they're really worried and anxious. It's important to reassure them that they are in the right place and give them information about COVID-19 and how to stay safe," says Jessie-Lee Tuari-Hape.

As well as doing administration tasks alongside doctors and nurses on the front line, the trio have also been working behind the scenes inputting data.

"We can see the big picture, the logistics of how it all works and the importance of collecting the data," says Jessie-Lee.

CBAC Site Manager Ngaire Lewis from EBPHA says the trio has been a great addition to the team.

This week the trio hopes to have an opportunity to help out at the Ōpōtiki CBAC – providing familiar friendly faces in what for many is a stressful time.

### The Flu Vaccine

By getting a Flu vaccine, we help to keep other whānau members safe

Flu vaccine is free for kaumatua and kuia (over 65) wāhine hapū and anyone with chest, heart, kidney problems, diabetes or cancer

To get a Flu vaccine make contact with your GP or local pharmacy (Please ring first)



*Te Arawa Whānau Ora and affiliated providers putting together welfare packs for whānau.*



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**IF IN DOUBT,  
ACT LIKE YOU  
HAVE COVID-19**





# Dr Phil Shoemack – Medical Officer of Health

The New Zealand Government has followed public health advice and decided that hunkering down at home will be a crucial element of the response to eliminating the COVID-19 virus from Aotearoa. The 'lockdown', as we're calling it, is only one element of the response which also includes closing our border, reminding everyone about hand-washing and safe cough and sneeze etiquette, keeping our physical distance from others, and staying home to help break the chain of transmission.

In making us all go home, and stay home, the Government has put priority on the health and wellbeing of people above other considerations. It's an acknowledgement that, at the core, society is about people. Of course the Kiwi version of lockdown isn't as restrictive as it could be compared with other countries, nor is it proving to necessarily be as negative an experience as we might have anticipated. We're also fortunate that, as a nation, we've been able to learn from the good and

bad experiences of others as COVID-19 arrived in New Zealand a few weeks behind most of the world.

We're all having to make decisions that we've never made before, with some of them turning out to be extremely important. Who do we want in our bubble was one of the big ones - and we didn't have much time to figure it out. How much flour and toilet paper will we need may have seemed important at the time, but by comparison it was fairly petty.

So with those decisions behind us how are we doing? Well, it's early days, but the experts seem to think the lockdown is reducing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on New Zealand. Plus, staying close to home and spending time with loved ones is having some really neat consequences. The pace of life has noticeably slowed but we haven't let the physical distancing message get in the way of improving connections with each other. We're walking and biking

instead of using the car. Many of those walks and bike rides are with our bubble mates and we're having fun spending quality time together. We're exploring places close to home that we've never been to before. We're meeting people in our neighbourhood, from a safe distance of course, that we've never spoken with before. The dog has never been fitter, or had so much attention. The neighbourhood is quieter without all those cars and the roads are finally safe for children to ride their bikes. We're eating better without all that junk food and even the oldies are learning how to stay connected at a distance with the positive aspects of social media and video-links.

While there is still much water to go under the bridge, and it will be a while before we, and our economy, are back on our own two feet again, when we look back at 2020, let's make sure we remember all the good stuff that came out of a really difficult situation.

## Supporting Ōpōtiki

With the entire nation going into level 4 lockdown due to COVID-19. It has been in the strength and unity that we have come together as an Iwi as a Community. Te Pou Oranga o Whakatōhea Social and Health have been of a few essential services on the front line, supporting our most vulnerable whānau of Ōpōtiki. Staff have been dedicated and committed and like many services across the country, it has been difficult to stay within our bubbles and source necessary resources for care.

The teams have provided up to 300 care packages to our elderly in the first week



*Te Pou Oranga o Whakatōhea delivering essential items  
with the Hapu Ngati Ira to all of the Pakeke*

of lockdown, continued GP services, sourcing emergency housing and supporting cases of domestic violence and mental health. It is in our values and purpose that we will withstand and

recover from this pandemic.

*Kia rangatira ai ngā uri o te Whakatōhea*

To lift our nation, and to grow and invest in the wellbeing of our people.





## Protecting residents and staff in residential care across the Lakes DHB area

Over recent weeks, Lakes DHB management and their clinical nurse educators have been working with all 13 age-related residential care facilities to ensure that everything possible is being done to protect vulnerable older people living in rest homes, along with staff working in the sector.

The DHB's Portfolio Manager for Health of Older People, Vanessa Russell says the facilities have put in place a no visitor process, have access to PPE and have upskilled staff on the use of PPE and on the importance of hand washing techniques.

Lakes DHB has checked with its aged residential care providers on three occasions in recent weeks and there is

now a process in place to ensure that they have access to PPE from Lakes DHB.

This coming week, in light of the outbreaks in other residential care facilities in New Zealand, Lakes DHB will be contacting all the providers again to ensure that they are confident with their policies, procedures and staff awareness on how to remain safe from COVID 19 infection.

Any new admissions are only for people living in the Lakes DHB area.

Consistent, regular contact with the managers of aged residential care including a site visit has all helped reinforce the good work by providers.

## Pasifika funding

Last week, the Government announced a \$17 million COVID-19 Pacific Response Package to help protect Pacific communities from the increased risks they face from the COVID-19 outbreak. This funding, which is part of the Government's broader \$500 million package is already being made available to a range of Pacific providers to make an immediate difference.

In addition to increasing the capacity of Pacific health and disability services, the funding will help widen the availability of public health guidance in Pacific languages and is establishing an outreach programme to help connect Pacific communities to access non-clinical health services.

**[covid19.govt.nz/communities/pacific-peoples/](https://covid19.govt.nz/communities/pacific-peoples/)**

## Key contacts for public enquiries and assistance

**Healthline 0800 358 5453**

For local health agency information visit **[covid19.bopdhb.govt.nz](https://covid19.bopdhb.govt.nz)** or email **[bopcovid19@bopdhb.govt.nz](mailto:bopcovid19@bopdhb.govt.nz)**

- Government helpline **0800 779 997**
- Bay of Plenty Civil Defence & Emergency Management Group Call Centre **0800 884 222** (7am to 7pm, 7 days)
- For counselling support call or text **1737**
- Essential business enquiries **[essential@mbie.govt.nz](mailto:essential@mbie.govt.nz)** or **0800 22 66 57**
- Reporting breaches of self-isolation **[nhccselfisolation@health.govt.nz](mailto:nhccselfisolation@health.govt.nz)**
- Reporting breaches of any Level 4 Alert restrictions **[www.police.govt.nz/105support](https://www.police.govt.nz/105support)**
- For financial or employer wage subsidy assistance, contact WINZ on **0800 40 80 40**

**Bay of Plenty Civil Defence Emergency Management Group is operating a**

# Local helpline

**Unite  
against  
COVID-19**

**to help people access essentials such as food and medication during the national lock down period.**

**The number is 0800 884 222 and available from 7am to 7pm, 7 days a week.**

**In Rotorua ring Pacific Islands Development Charitable Trust 07 347 7217**

These services are intended for those facing hardship – particularly to assist the disabled, at risk groups, and people without access to their own transport.

