



NEW ZEALAND  
**CHIROPRACTIC BOARD**  
TE POARI KAIKOROHITI O AOTEAROA

# POLICY AND GUIDELINES:

ALERT LEVELS 4 & 3

August 2021

## Associated Policy Documents

- Telehealth Guidelines
- Competency-Based Professional Standards for Chiropractors
- Standards of Cultural Competence Policy
- Code of Ethics

## Revision Schedule

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date Approved</b>
<b>One</b>	April 2020
<b>Two</b>	February 2021
<b>Three</b>	August 2021

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## GUIDELINES FOR CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES AT COVID-19 ALERT LEVEL 3 AND 4

Chiropractors have a duty of care to support their patients during the National COVID-19 Crisis and to reduce community spread to yourself, your whānau, staff, and your patients.

During Alert Levels 3 and 4 Chiropractors must remain vigilant to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is the directive of Te Poari Kaikorohiti o Aotearoa, the Chiropractic Board (the Board) that there will be very few instances where Chiropractors are able to treat patients under these levels.

The Alert Level criteria for face-to-face patient visits have been updated following Ministry of Health (MoH) directives and as such, the criteria for seeing patients face-to-face may be subject to further change.

**First and foremost, Chiropractors are expected to adhere to the Ministry of Health's directives.**

It is your responsibility to ensure you are kept informed of information available on the Ministry of Health's Website.

The Board will notify the profession at the time of an Alert Level criteria change announcement with the latest communication from MoH regarding the criteria for providing face-to-face care during that Alert Level.

*Virtual appointments (telehealth) should be provided where possible and is the preferred method of service delivery. This means your clinic doors cannot open to see patients on a 'business as usual' basis.*

## THE USE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) AND TRANSMISSION PRECAUTIONS

At all Alert Levels PPE should be used according to the Ministry of Health [guidance](#).

The Ministry has updated its [advice on the use of face masks](#) in the community as part of New Zealand's ongoing response to COVID-19.

Standard and Transmission based precautions should be used for all patient/client care activities regardless of their diagnosis or suspected infectious status. Please refer to the Ministry's website on [PPE, cleaning and hand hygiene](#).

Workforce Risk Assessment and Guidance tools should be used to identify staff vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19, to assess and mitigate their risks, including through workplace restrictions and modifications.

Useful guidance and assessment tools being used by DHBs can be found here:

<https://tas.health.nz/employment-and-capability-building/employment-relations/dhb-covid-19-workforce-faqs-and-resources/>

## COVID-19 INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

The National Telehealth Service advice lines are available at all Alert Levels. This includes Healthline (0800 611 116) and the dedicated COVID-19 health advice line (0800 358 5453) – both available 24/7. The COVID-19 clinical advice line for community health professionals is available Monday to Saturday 8am to 7pm.

Health workers can use the Āwhina app to stay up to date on the latest COVID-19 information and receive notifications when information is updated: [more information can be found here](#).

## APPENDIX 1: GUIDANCE FOR FACE-TO-FACE APPOINTMENTS

### (If permitted under the Alert Level announcement)

The key requirements are to have strict hygiene measures and physical distancing measures in place and to use personal protective equipment (PPE) when required.

### OVERARCHING REQUIREMENTS

You must:

1. continue to deliver services via telehealth. Where possible, undertake an initial telehealth consultation to establish the need for a face-to-face consultation;
2. consider your safety and bubble as well as your patient's safety;
3. screen patients for COVID-19 signs or symptoms when making the appointment and again on arrival;
4. carefully consider the risks and benefits of a face-to-face consultation if patients are 70 years of age or over or have significant co-morbidities;
5. know and understand relevant Health and Safety procedures and latest advice from Ministry of Health including ['advice for all health professionals'](#);
6. carry out a risk assessment and have a plan in place for the location of the treatment;
7. adapt your practise to allow enough time between appointments to clean equipment and surfaces before another patient is brought into the clinic;
8. keep staffing numbers within the clinic to a **minimum**. This includes a minimal number of support staff, if any; and
9. establish a plan of how to minimise contacts with multiple patients especially if working at different clinics.

### PRE-PREPARATION

- Have knowledge and understanding of relevant and current Health and Safety procedures and advice from Ministry of Health including ['advice for all health professionals'](#)
- Carry out a risk assessment and have a plan in place for your premises e.g. identifying which door patients will enter and leave from
- [Select PPE as recommended](#) by Ministry of Health, source PPE via DHBs, and train staff on its use, including [donning, removing and disposing of PPE](#)
- Have cleaning materials and PPE sourced and in stock at the clinic
- Cleaning plan developed and implemented
- All chiropractors and support staff trained in new clinic procedures and all procedures provided to them
- Plan in place for how appointments will be handled if there is more than one patient to be seen in a session e.g. one patient in / one out, time between appointments or staggered times if there is more than one practitioner working in the clinic
- Ensuring no patient to patient contact; patients wait outside clinic and are contacted by phone to come in (i.e. no waiting area patients)
- Ensure you have an NZ COVID Tracer QR Code displayed at your practice, or keep a contact tracing register of who has been in the clinic with current contact details confirmed (including staff members) in case contact tracing is later required.

## PREPARATION

- Patient is screened for COVID-19 signs or symptoms by phone or telehealth prior to offering a face-to-face consultation in the clinic
- Determine if the patient requires input from any other service such as A&E or urgent care/radiology, prior to coming into the clinic
- When making the appointment give clear instructions to patients regarding where to come, what to expect when they arrive, and how things may differ from their usual visits
- Ensure appropriate PPE is in place ready to be used (all staff to be trained as above)
- Only have one chiropractor using each room (no sharing on other days)
- Limit points of entry to the clinic – preferably patients can enter one door and leave from another
- All unnecessary items should be removed from the waiting room and surfaces kept clear and clean, including excessive furniture, wall hangings/posters, waste bins, water coolers etc.
- Areas of known contamination should be cleaned and disinfected
- Make it clear at the entrances that no walk-in appointments off the street are available.

## DURING CLINIC VISIT

- Patient again screened for any COVID-19 signs or symptoms prior to entering the clinic
- Require patient, and others, to 'hand sanitise' on arrival and departure from the clinic
- Fill out any paperwork and forms for the patient (sign with cleaned pen)
- Allow only the patient to be present in the clinic; a carer or guardian may be allowed to accompany the patient in appropriate circumstances so long as they are screened first and are free from COVID-19 signs or symptoms
- Confirm contact details for the patient and each person accompanying the patient and inform them that these details may be used for contact tracing, if required
- Maintain 2 metre separation where possible, for instance, during the subjective examination
- Follow PPE protocol as advised by the Ministry of Health
- Minimise contact time closer than 2 metres
- Follow all hand and hygiene practices
- Keep doors open (to the clinic, treatment doors if possible ajar)
- Close the clinic toilet to patients, and advise patients when making the appointment
- Minimise the use of equipment such as pillows for instance, which are not easy to clean or replace.

## POST CLINIC VISIT

- Clean all equipment, pillows and equipment after each patient contact.
- Carry out [correct steps for safe removal and disposal of PPE](#)
- Follow cleaning protocol - wiping down all hard surfaces with detergent and water and then use a disinfectant
- Appropriate PPE should be worn for cleaning the room
- PPE and waste should be disposed in a closed clinical waste bin and in accordance with clinical waste requirements