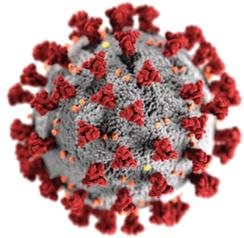


COVID-19 IN NEW ZEALAND

24 JULY 2020



COVID-19 is the disease caused by a novel coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2. It is a respiratory infection that can affect your lungs and airways. The latest COVID-19 health advice can be found on the [Ministry of Health webpage](#).

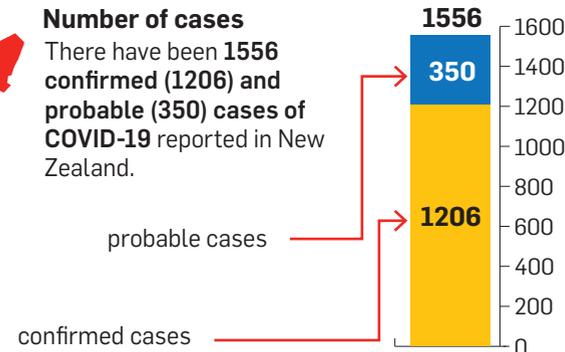
This report summarises all reported COVID-19 cases in New Zealand from **30 January 2019 to 24 July 2020**.

[Click here](#) for the ESR COVID-19 dashboard.



Number of cases

There have been **1556 confirmed (1206) and probable (350) cases of COVID-19** reported in New Zealand.



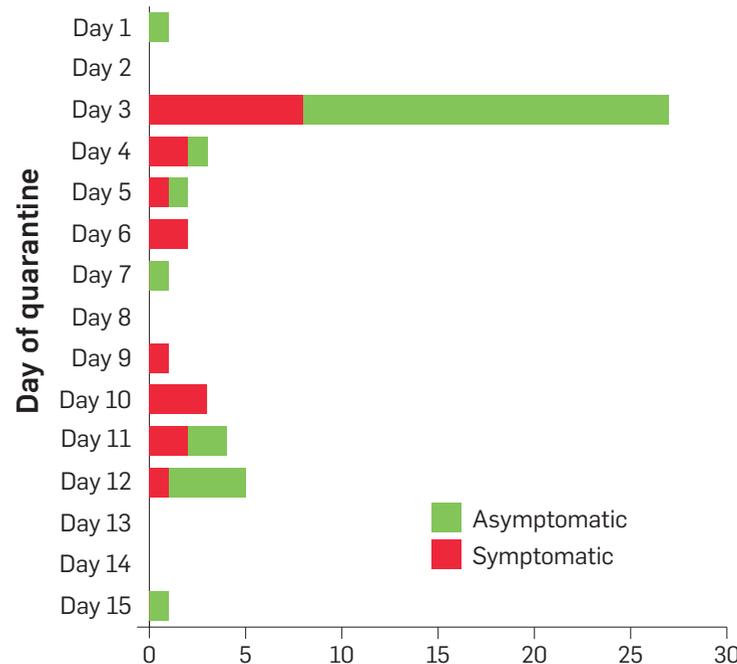
Confirmed cases are patients who have had COVID-19 confirmed by a laboratory test. Probable cases are patients whose laboratory test for COVID-19 is inconclusive but either a doctor believes they have symptoms of COVID-19 (and has ruled out any other causes) or they have been in close contact with someone with the COVID-19.

COVID-19 cases have been reported in every district health board (DHB) across the country. The highest number of cases have been reported in Waitemata, Southern, Auckland and Waikato DHBs.

New Zealand's elimination strategy in respect of the COVID-19 pandemic involves a range of control measures designed to stop the transmission of COVID-19 in New Zealand. To support the elimination strategy, New Zealand's current national testing strategy focuses on identifying all case of COVID-19 in New Zealand. This strategy includes testing people who present to primary and secondary care with relevant symptoms, contact tracing and testing around identified cases and testing international travellers arriving in New Zealand.

The number of new cases reported has decreased dramatically since late March in line with public health measures taken and despite more people being tested. All cases reported since 17 June have been in managed isolation on entering New Zealand.

Figure 1. Day of positive swab for COVID-19 cases in managed isolation, 17 June–24 July 2020 (Source: EpiSurv 29 July 2020, 1000)



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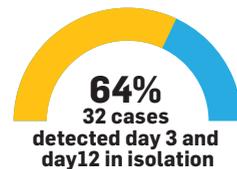
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Who has been infected?

- Many of our cases have been in people returning from overseas. As expected, with the influx of people returning to New Zealand ahead of the enhanced border restrictions, COVID-19 cases in returning travellers peaked on 21 March. Most of these travellers were aged 20–34 years, of European or Other ethnicity and live in less socioeconomically deprived areas of New Zealand.
- All cases reported since 17 June have been tested as part of the managed isolation and quarantine process for people entering New Zealand.
- However, overall most of our cases have been in people that have been in contact with a person who became infected overseas. In this group there is a higher number of cases in females, younger age groups, among those reporting Māori and Pacific peoples ethnicity and people in more socioeconomically deprived areas of New Zealand. These differences are influenced by the outbreaks we have experienced. For example, the higher number of younger people is due to an outbreak associated with a college, which included many people in the 5–19 years age group.

Cases reported since 17 June

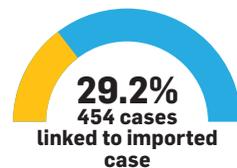
- There have been **50 cases** identified through testing carried out in managed isolation and quarantine facilities (Figure 1 on previous page).
- The majority of these cases (**64%, 32 cases**) were detected on days 3 and 12 of isolation, when routine testing is carried out. Cases detected at other times were tested as a result of developing symptoms, delayed laboratory testing or due to close contact with a confirmed case.



What was the source of infection?

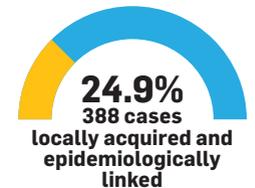
The source of infection for COVID-19 cases is assigned to one of these four categories.

- **Imported cases:** Cases with a reported history of international travel within 14 days of the start of their symptoms – **625 (40.2%)**.
- **Import-related cases:** Cases that have a reported link (e.g. are a close contact) to an imported case – **454 cases (29.2%)**.



- **Locally acquired case, source unknown:** Cases that have no reported history of international travel within 14 days prior to the start of their symptoms and have no reported link to another case – **89 cases (5.7%)**.
- **Locally acquired case, epidemiologically linked:** Cases that have a reported link (e.g. are a close contact) to a locally acquired case that has an unknown source – **388 cases (24.9%)**.

Over time, some cases may move between categories (for example from “locally acquired, source unknown” to “locally acquired, epidemiologically linked”) as investigations continues and further information is identified.



What are the most common clinical presentations?

- The most common symptom reported was cough, followed by sore throat, headache and fever.
- **Eighty-one patients** were initially reported as having no symptoms (asymptomatic). Of those, twenty-six patients went on to develop symptoms later on. Of the 50 cases identified in managed isolation and quarantine facilities, 29 were asymptomatic at the time of testing. To date, none of these cases have developed symptoms.
- The proportion of infected people in New Zealand who have severe outcomes (i.e. have been hospitalised, have been admitted to Intensive Care or have died) is less than has been seen in other countries. **Ninety-seven people have been hospitalised, ten have been admitted to the Intensive Care Unit, and twenty-two people have died.**
- Generally, COVID-19 is more severe in older people and those with underlying medical conditions. People were more likely to be hospitalised if they had an underlying health condition. The most commonly reported underlying conditions are cardiovascular disease, diabetes or chronic lung disease. **Eleven of the people who have died had an underlying health condition and all but one were aged over 65 years.**
- In New Zealand, the majority of our cases are in people aged under 65 years and 87% of patients have not reported an underlying medical condition. This likely accounts for the lower number of patients with severe outcomes in New Zealand, compared to other countries.

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Demographic breakdown of confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases to 24 July 2020 by source (Source: EpiSurv 29 July 2020, 1000)

Demographics	Imported case ¹	Import-related ²	Locally acquired, epidemiologically linked ³	Locally acquired case, unknown source ⁴	Total
Total	625	454	388	89	1556
Sex					
Female	307	251	252	49	859
Male	318	203	136	40	697
Age groups (yrs)					
<1	0	2	2	0	4
1-4	3	8	8	1	20
5-19	16	54	66	0	136
20-34	290	119	110	21	540
35-49	95	104	87	19	305
50-64	138	118	67	28	351
65-79	80	34	29	18	161
≥80	3	15	19	2	39
Ethnic group[¥]					
Māori	36	65	27	9	137
Pacific peoples	11	12	52	7	82
Asian	72	34	99	11	216
European or Other	498	341	207	58	1104
Unknown	8	2	3	4	17
At least one underlying condition[†]	77	62	58	13	210
Hospitalised	33	21	32	11	97
Health worker	36	44	95	8	183

1: Imported cases: Cases with a reported history of international travel within 14 days of onset.
 2: Import related cases: Cases that have a reported link (close contact or epidemiological link) to an imported case.
 3: Locally acquired case, epidemiologically linked: Cases that have a reported link (close contact or other epidemiological link) to a locally acquired case with unknown source.

4: Locally acquired case, source unknown: Cases that have no reported history of international travel within 14 days of onset and no recorded epidemiological link to a source case.
 ¥ NHI derived ethnicity data has been used in these analyses.
 † Does not include 'other' underlying conditions.

