

FACT SHEET – 24 March 2020

CODE YELLOW Questions and Answers

What Code Yellow means for you and your family

There are still no confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the Cook Islands.

So far 11 tests have come back negative. We are awaiting test results for a further 70 swabs from New Zealand.

This week we activated the 10 Punas on Rarotonga, who are engaging with their communities, along with health officials to ensure we are doing all we can to prevent the spread of this virus among our people.

The hospital Emergency Department services have been relocated to the Tupapa community clinic. All coughs and colds consultations are now being conducted by phone.

Police have suspended liquor licenses for bars and nightclubs.

Travel restrictions to the Pa Enua are in place. Supervised quarantine is also in place for all arriving passengers to Rarotonga.

The escalating threat of pandemic COVID-19 outside our borders, in particular New Zealand, now call for us to move to Code Yellow as part of our national emergency response, even though we do not have any confirmed COVID-19 cases in the Cook Islands.

Code Yellow means Covid-19 is contained but the risk of community transmission is growing.

Preventative measures implemented early in an epidemic can slow the transmission of infection and reduce the peak number of cases. We're aiming to flatten the curve and slow the spread of the disease.

How the alert system works

- Code Blue: No COVID-19 in the Cook Islands. The focus is on preparation and readiness. Measures focus on delaying entry of the disease through hand washing, cough etiquette and social distancing. Minimal disruption to society such as travel advisories and restrictions. Reducing business as usual.

- Code Yellow: Heightened alert triggered by possibility of a confirmed case of COVID-19. Measures are focused on delaying widespread disease transmission. The disease is not spreading widely in the Cook Islands and is being contained. Moderate disruption to society such as quarantine and isolation.
- Code Red: The focus is mitigating the impact of disease transmission. At this level, disease is severe and is spreading widely. Major disruption to society such as school closures and work from home notices.
- Code Green: Recovery stage. The country will move to this level when the disease is declining and can be managed under normal business arrangements. Transition from emergency response to business as usual.

Code Yellow advice to the public

- Maintain handwashing and cough hygiene etiquette
- Stock up on food, water and medicines for two weeks in case you are required to stay home in quarantine or isolation
- Make arrangements to work from home if possible
- Avoid kissing, hugging or shaking hands with others
- Stay at home and avoid public spaces and others
- If you have fever, cough, or shortness of breath/breathing difficulties - please stay at home and free call the Healthline for advice on 0800 1800, 0800 1801 or 0800 1802
- Avoid or defer non-essential and non-urgent travel overseas and to the Pa Enea
- Be kind to others and remember one day it could be you
- Cooperate with health officials and your local Puna
- Visit www.covid19.gov.ck for up to date information

Code Yellow measures include:

- National Emergency Operations Centre resourced 24/7
- Health professionals on standby as needed
- Essential services will be maintained such as food, water, energy, waste disposal, mortuary services, financial services, law enforcement, ICT, transport, infrastructure
- Parliament on standby to pass enabling legislation under urgency

- Te Marae Ora to monitor flu-like symptoms presenting by phone
- Testing lab samples overseas and plans to expand testing capability in-country
- Border measures and travel restrictions assessed and revised as needed
- Cargo staging areas to minimise interactions between cargo handlers at ports and workers in country
- Strict infection control procedures observed and regular decontamination
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) stocked
- Additional resources and finances mobilised as needed
- Puna are mobilised as needed to support the community