

Information from Manatū Hauora – the Ministry of Health

14 September 2022

The response below should be interpreted from a risk perspective.

COVID-19 Public Health Response (Masks) Order (2022)

Mask wearing is a requirement in certain health service premises under Section 5(1) of the [COVID-19 Public Health Response \(Masks\) Order \(2022\)](#). Refer to <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/regulation/public/2022/0255/latest/LMS748432.html> for full details.

Masks are strongly recommended in high risk settings

- While health workers and patients/residents on the premises of a health service are not required to wear a mask under [COVID-19 Public Health Response \(Masks\) Order \(2022\)](#), practitioners should still complete a risk assessment to determine the appropriate use of PPE for their own clinical environment.
- Mask use may still be indicated where there is a risk of transmission or (for example) where there may be vulnerable patients. PPE is considered as part of Standard Precautions which are a set of IPC measures required for all healthcare interactions. A risk assessment is required before every interaction, and/or every session, with a patient/client or resident by the healthcare worker. When a patient/client or resident is suspected or confirmed to have a transmissible infectious disease, then Transmission-based Precautions should be followed.
- It is strongly recommended that healthcare workers follow the infection prevention and control recommendations for health and disability care workers available at: <https://www.health.govt.nz/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-information-specific-audiences/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-central-supply/infection-prevention-and-control-recommendations-health-and-disability-care-workers>.

Dental Council note: oral health practitioners must follow the Dental Council's [infection prevention and control practice standard](#).

- Some premises may establish additional mask requirements if they feel necessary based on their own circumstances and local assessment of degree of risk and relevant legal requirements.
- If you are at higher personal risk or you want to reduce your risk of becoming unwell mask use is strongly recommended.
- If you are in situations where the 'three Cs' make the spread of the virus most likely mask use is strongly recommended:
 - **closed spaces** with poor ventilation (e.g., small meeting rooms)
 - **crowded places** with many people nearby (e.g., crowded buses or trains)
 - **close-contact settings**, especially where people have close-range conversations, (including singing or shouting).

The risk increases when you're in a setting that involves one or more of the 'three Cs' for a prolonged period of time.

- Having a highly vaccinated workforce continues to be one of our strongest tools to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. In addition, we strongly encourage you to wear a mask in the workplace in situations where the 'three Cs' apply, if you're at higher risk of severe illness, you want to reduce your risk of becoming unwell, or if you're a household contact during the 5 days you are testing. Please also keep up good hand hygiene, and if you're unwell please stay home and test.