

# COVID-19 Advice for people with SCI:

## #3: If you have Carers

### *What are the symptoms of COVID-19?*

The symptoms of covid-19 infection are:

- A cough
- A high temperature
- Shortness of breath

Some people may have only minor symptoms. It is believed that an infected person is most contagious when they are most symptomatic.

### *What is the best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19?*

The coronavirus is spread through droplets when coughing and sneezing or by close contact with someone who has the virus. It can be spread from close contact (within 2 meters of the infected individual). It is believed that the infected person is most contagious when they are most symptomatic.

The best way to prevent spread is:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a bin.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in the home and work environment.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Social distancing: You should avoid public places if you cannot prevent face-to-face contact closer than 2 metre from other people.
- Consider whether outings and travel, both individual and family, are sensible and necessary.

### *How is COVID-19 treated?*

Currently, there is no specific vaccine or treatment. The best way to recover from it is to:

- Get plenty of rest
- Keep hydrated
- Take simple remedies such as paracetamol to help with symptoms such as a high temperature

## *What if my Carer gets sick?*

**YOU** must ensure you have sufficient backup or a “Plan B” in case your regular Carer doesn’t show up for work. You may want to contact your care agency to discuss this but it is still wise to have a backup plan. This might involve family or whānau or friends or neighbours. Have their phone numbers readily available and the individuals briefed about the plan. Ultimately this is **YOUR** responsibility because despite their best efforts you may not be able to rely on the Agency or the DHB or the Government.

- Have at least a week of non-perishable food in your home at any given time and identify people who can assist with shopping or delivery.
- Stock up on other important supplies (e.g., toilet paper, cleaning supplies, hygiene products, etc.).
- Identify a way to make sure you can get your medications in a timely manner such as having friends or family assist you or using a pharmacy that offers a home delivery service.
- Make sure your backup Carers wash their hands and use hand sanitizer when they arrive and each time prior to touching or feeding you. If they’re inexperienced they may not know this. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol
- Regularly clean, sanitize and disinfect the surfaces that are touched in your home to prevent spread of infection.
- Use disinfecting wipes on items that are frequently touched.
- Urge your Carer to seek medical care if they are sick and utilize your backup support.
- Plan for your pets by stocking pet food or arranging a backup home for your pet.

NB: The latest Ministry of Health information on COVID-19 can be found at:  
<https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus>

### **Acknowledgements:**

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Fact Sheet – Shepard Centre, Atlanta, Georgia, USA  
Spinal Injuries Assn briefing on SCI & Coronavirus – SIA, Milton Keynes, UK  
Spinal Injuries Assn advice for SCI persons – SIA, Milton Keynes, UK



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