



## Mandatory Use of Mask or Face Covering within Taupō Health Centre

Face coverings can help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Wearing a face covering helps to keep you and others safe. They are particularly useful when physical distancing is difficult to maintain such as here in the Taupō Health Centre clinic rooms.

COVID-19 spreads through the air (airborne) and by droplet particles. This can occur when someone speaks, laughs, coughs or sneezes. It can happen whether someone who has COVID-19 feels sick or has no obvious symptoms (asymptomatic)

Face coverings are an extra protective physical barrier to help keep us all safe.

### **Patients, whanau and visitors:**

All patients, whanau, whanau support, visitors and contractors to Taupō Health Centre must wear a suitable face mask when entering our buildings. You will be provided with a surgical face mask in the event you don't have one.

This directive also applies to people with mask exemptions.

Face masks must cover your nose, mouth and chin **at all times** unless you are asked to remove it

### **Mask Exemptions:**

Patients with mask exemptions will be seen via the rear carpark and will, if necessary, be invited into the building through the rear doors of the Urgent Care Clinic. **We will not refuse to care for patients who can't wear a mask, we will just manage the process differently.**

Risk analysis suggests that patients without face mask protection are more at risk of contracting illness like COVID-19 than those who can wear a mask. Likewise, staff and other patients are more at risk from contracting an infection from people not wearing a mask who might have COVID-19.

**Children under the age of 12 years** are exempt from wearing face masks in New Zealand although we strongly encourage their use within the practice. Children will be allowed into the practice without a face mask so long as they are symptom free for respiratory illness and haven't had close contact with a known Covid case.

### **People refusing to wear a face mask (without an exemption):**

Patients, whanau and visitors declining to wear a face mask will not be allowed in the building.

If the person has an appointment at the practice, they will be asked to drive to the back carpark where they will be seen and assessed by the clinician they have an appointment with. If required, the patient will be invited into the clinic via the rear doors of the Urgent Care Clinic for further support.

Please be assured this is required to ensure that all patients, including those who decline to wear a mask, their whanau and THC staff are protected from the inadvertent spread of COVID-19 infection.

**This policy is implemented and enforced in "good faith" to support the health and safety of all staff, patients and others visiting Taupō Health Centre during this pandemic.**