All COVID-19 requirements removed

14 Aug 2023

Effective from 12:01am Tuesday 15 August, 7 day mandatory isolation, wearing of face masks for visitors to healthcare facilities removed.

The Government is removing the remaining COVID-19 public health requirements, effective from 12:01am tomorrow, Minister of Health Dr Ayesha Verrall announced today.

While fluctuations from week to week are expected, overall COVID-19 case rates, wastewater levels and hospitalisations have been trending downwards since the beginning of June and over the past month reported COVID-19 cases have hit their lowest since February 2022.

Ayesha Verrall says the public health risk from COVID-19 is now considered low compared to other stages of the pandemic and it's safe to remove the final requirements.

"While our case numbers will continue to fluctuate, we have not seen the dramatic peaks that characterised COVID-19 rates last year.

Covid has put considerably less pressure on the health system this winter and other illnesses have been better planned for and managed.

"This, paired with the population's immunity levels, means Cabinet and I consider we're positioned to safely remove the remaining COVID-19 requirements.

"We've only reached this point thanks to the hard work and care New Zealanders have taken over the course of the pandemic.

"And while not mandated, the Ministry of Health guidance is to stay at home for five days if you're unwell or have tested positive for COVID-19," Ayesha Verrall said.

COVID-19 accounted for 2.2% of hospital admissions this morning and New Zealand has now likely passed the winter influenza peak.

"It has been a long road, however thanks to lots of hard work, New Zealand's COVID-19 approach has moved from an emergency response to sustainable long-term management.

"Mask wearing remains an important way we can prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19, in health and disability care settings.

COVID-19 changed the world. It was an unknown to virtually all of us. I appreciate from the top of the North Island to the bottom of the South the efforts Kiwis took to keep themselves and their community safe," said Ayesha Verrall.