

Fact sheet

COVID-19

As the COVID-19 situation evolves, you may have questions on how it will impact your water supply and wastewater services. We would like to assure you that you will continue to receive safe drinking water and effective wastewater services. Please read the questions and answers below for further information.

Can I catch COVID-19 from drinking water?

There is no evidence that you can catch COVID-19 by drinking treated tap water.

Information on how we treat the water is available on our website: www.watercare.co.nz.

Should I buy bottled water?

There is no need to buy bottled water for drinking purposes. Tap water is safe to drink and will continue to be supplied to your home.

How are we protecting the water supply?

We have stringent hygiene measures in place at our water treatment plants. In addition, there is almost no human contact in the process of treating water for drinking. Existing water treatment and disinfection processes, including use of chlorine, are effective in removing viruses from water supplies.

We are in contact with government agencies to monitor and understand the health impact of COVID-19 as it develops.

What if your workers are quarantined at home, will water still be supplied?

Water is an essential service and we are well prepared to manage our response to COVID-19.

We have existing emergency response plans and are continuing to update them in response to the most current available information. Our water treatment plants are secure, have back up power and require few staff to operate them.

Can COVID-19 be transmitted by the wastewater network?

As with other viruses, COVID-19 can be present in the faeces (poo) of infected people.

We continue to manage and treat wastewater properly and carefully to protect public health and the environment. Best practices for protecting the occupational health of workers at wastewater treatment plants continue to be maintained.

What happens if there's a wastewater overflow on my property?

Whenever there is a wastewater overflow on public or private property, our maintenance crews respond quickly. Their focus is on:

- Containing the overflow
- Repairing the pipe or clearing the blockage
- Cleaning up the affected area
- Spraying the affected area with disinfectant.

We have not changed the way we respond to overflows in response to COVID-19 as our standard practises are effective in managing the risks presented by viruses in wastewater and protecting public health.