What is COVID-19? COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a type of coronavirus.

The **symptoms** of COVID-19 are:

- a cough
- a high temperature (at least 38°C)
- shortness of breath.

The symptoms are similar to other illnesses, such as cold and flu and do not necessarily mean you have COVID-19.

Shortness of breath can can be a sign of possible pneumonia and requires immediate medical attention.

If you have these symptoms and are concerned about your health, phone Healthline (for free) on **0800 358 5453** or Coast to Coast Health on **(09) 431 4128** for advice.

COVID-19, like the flu, can be spread when a person who has COVID-19 coughs, sneezes or talks by spreading droplets containing the virus a short distance, which quickly settle on surrounding surfaces. You may get infected by the virus if you touch those surfaces or objects and then touch your mouth, nose or eyes.

Prevention – how to protect yourself and others

There are simple steps you can take to protect you and your family/whānau.

New Zealand is still containing the virus and confirmed cases have all been travellers from infected countries and their family members.

There is no need to stop going about your daily business if you feel well. Follow the advice of the Ministry of Health.

To prevent the spread of any contagious illness, it's really important to use good hygiene, regularly wash and thoroughly dry your hands, and use good cough etiquette.

- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or cover your mouth and nose with tissues
- Put used tissues in the bin or a bag immediately.
- Wash your hands with soap and water often (for at least 20 seconds).
- Try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.
- Avoid close personal contact, such as kissing, shaking hands, sharing cups or food with sick people.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects, such as doorknobs.
- Stay home if you feel unwell.
- You should self-isolate for 14 days if you have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or have been to any countries of concern.
- It is also advisable to get a flu shot to prevent you from getting unwell from seasonal flu – but there is as yet no immunisation against Covid-19

Dedicated Healthline 0800 number for COVID-19 health advice and information is 0800 358 5453
It is free and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.