

COVID-19 Community Forum

Wednesday 17 February 2021



Summary of the main themes from the forum:

- Concerns around the new outbreak and lifting of the lockdown. The Department of Health acknowledged these concerns and assured community members that they are not relying on single test results to make these decisions. Everyone from potential exposure sites is being urged to get tested multiple times to make sure that the test results are most accurate. There have been no mystery cases and the outbreak has been contained. The massive amount of testing and negative results has helped make this decision.
- Feedback that there should be QR code scanning at more places that allows contact tracing to happen at a faster pace. The Department of Health confirmed that they are constantly looking for ways to improve all policies and procedures in terms of contact tracing. Community feedback like this really helps.
- Some community members wanted to know if a common cold can hide the COVID 19 virus. Department of Health has assured that while the symptoms are fairly common, the COVID 19 test can differentiate between a common cold and the COVID 19 virus. This is one of the reasons that department urges everyone to get tested even if they have common cold-like symptoms.
- Discussion around the pending release of the vaccinations, their safety and how they work. The department indicated that the Pfizer and Astra Zenica vaccines have been approved and safe to administer. The vaccine does not prevent a person from getting COVID 19 but reduces the severity and impact. It can take up to 2 weeks or more to see the benefits of the vaccine.
- Doubts regarding the duration of quarantine for a secondary contact. The Department of Health has clarified that the secondary contacts will have to quarantine till the primary contact is in quarantine and procures a negative test result. Depending on when they have been identified as a secondary contact, the duration can be up to 14 days (but can be much less).
- Concerns regarding the frequency and targeting of the sewage testing. The community members have been assured that the testing has been narrowed down to about 100,000 people catchments, which helps in thoroughly focusing on targeted areas. Key locations are tested twice a week.
- Questions around the UK strain of the virus. The Department of Health conveyed that while this variant has the potential to spread much faster, the community should stay alert and get tested, even with the slightest of symptoms. Different teams across the Department of Health are working constantly to update and improve response to the virus and its spread

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