

# Pre-departure testing: important update during current health response

*Information contained in this update is accurate as of 23 August 2021*

During the current public health emergency our labs are processing high-volumes of COVID-19 tests. We cannot guarantee pre-departure test results for travellers in less than 72 hours from time of collection. It is important that all patients presenting for this test are advised of this by the referrer.

Results within 24 hours are not possible at this time, and we are unable process urgent requests for this test.

To reduce the turnaround time for the test result the patient can bring the sample direct to the laboratory at Northland Pathology, 24 Rust Ave, Whangarei. To facilitate rapid identification write 'Traveller COVID swab' on the outside of the biohazard bag.

The sample should be delivered prior to 9.30am, to meet with the first courier to Auckland.

We ask that anyone delivering samples to the laboratory not to ask our staff for information regarding the time the result will be available. Staff do not have access to this information, and these conversations take up valuable work time in the current emergency.

Results are reported as soon as they are available so please do not phone the laboratory to expedite your result.

## COVID-19 Pre-departure testing process for travellers

Our labs continues to receive a high volume of enquiries regarding pre-departure testing for travellers. To assist with frequently asked questions please note the 4 step process for pre-departure testing as follows:

### Step 1: Consider the appropriate time to have your sample collected

- Sample should be collected as early as possible within the required pre-departure / pre-arrival timeframe (as defined by the destination country).
- Allow up to 72 hours from sample collection to when the result is required. Results are often available sooner, however a faster time to result cannot be guaranteed.

- This is the only testing service available, it is not possible to request or pay an additional fee to guarantee a quicker turnaround time.

### **Step 2: Contact your local medical practice/GP to have your sample collected**

- You do not need to be a registered patient.
- The medical practice will collect payment at the time you have the sample collected.
- Northland Pathology does not perform the swab collection.

### **Step 3: Sample delivery from medical practice/GP to laboratory**

- Standard practice is that your sample will be picked-up by a routine courier.
- If you wish to shorten the turnaround time for the test result the sample can be delivered directly to the laboratory by taxi or by the traveller themselves. To facilitate rapid identification write '**Traveller COVID swab**' on the outside of the biohazard bag.
- This direct delivery option is only available Monday to Friday, prior to 9.30am, if possible.
- If you are coming to our lab please remember to wear a mask at our facility and scan in.

### **Step 4: Results will be sent to the medical practice/GP within 72 hours of the sample collection**

- Results are reported as soon as they are available so please **do not phone the laboratory to expedite your result.**
- Our staff are currently incredibly busy, so do not come to the laboratory to request your result.
- Our labs provide the result to the referrer.
- Individuals requiring their results for travel or any other purpose must contact their referrer.

### **Refunds and retests**

- If your sample is received in Northland Pathology laboratory, Whangarei after 9.30am and /or less than 72 hours from needing

your result, and you miss your flight, **no refunds** will be provided. You must allow up to 72 hours from sample receipt to when the result is required.

- If your sample is collected with at least 72 hours before needing your result, delivered to Northland Pathology Laboratory before 9.30am and you do not receive your results in time and miss your flight, our lab will provide a full refund for your test, and will process a subsequent test free of charge. No further compensation is provided.