

COVID-19 – SCIP UPDATE

3 February 2022



TO ALL PATIENTS

With the move to **RED** in the government's new Traffic Light Framework the SCIP is putting in place arrangements to minimise risk to staff and patients while ensuring the service can continue in the event of a serious Omicron outbreak.

These changes are designed to see us safely through any Omicron “wave” which may be 2-3 months in duration.

As a Ministry of Health funded programme, the SCIP is considered a **Critical Health Service**.

The availability of some routine services will be limited, but **we continue to operate**.

The priority is to ensure that our patients can remain hearing to meet their day-to-day needs; **if you need an appointment, you will always be able to contact us to arrange one**.

Here's what you need to know;

Splitting our Teams

We'll be splitting our staff into separate “teams” on both our Lower Hutt and Christchurch clinic sites.

The clinics will be open at all times but staff will rotate between working-from-home (WFH) arrangements and clinic activity.

This will reduce the likelihood of all staff in the service having to isolate in case of COVID-19 infection.

Each team will operate as its own “bubble”. These arrangements may mean you see a clinician you don't usually see, or you may have a slightly longer wait to see your usual clinician.

Clinical Services

Some of our services will only be available by arrangement, but generally we will continue to see people, particularly those who have only recently received their cochlear implant.

- If you have a faulty processor or need parts, batteries, or repairs, you can **always** contact us for these.
- Surgery will continue to go ahead
- Candidacy assessments for sudden losses and urgent cases will still go ahead
- Annual follow ups won't be arranged automatically by us; **you can still ask for a review if you need one**
- Our usual visiting Audiology and Habilitation services will be deferred
- Regional seminars and User Group meetings will be cancelled until further advised

Drop-In Visits to our Clinics

If you wish to visit either clinic without an appointment please **call, text, or email ahead**.

This includes people who may have a faulty device and need an urgent replacement.

Please **do not drop in to either clinic without first advising us**.

When we make an appointment

We will discuss with you your specific needs when we make an appointment to ensure that your travel to the clinic and your visit to clinic takes no longer than necessary.

If you are eligible for a vaccine, we will ask you about your vaccination status. If you are unvaccinated, we will still be able to see you however staff may use additional PPE to ensure your safety in clinic.

Arrival at Clinic

Please do not arrive at our service if you are unwell; we will not be able to see you.

Please check in and observe any distancing and hygiene requirements when requested by staff.

We would prefer all individuals over 8 years to wear a mask unless requested to remove this by your clinician as part of your clinical care. If you have a mask exemption, please advise staff.

Staff may wear a mask during their session with you.

When you arrive the clinic door may be locked; please use the doorbell/button and someone will then greet you to let you in

You will be asked about your health in relation to COVID-19.

We will ask you about your vaccination status; if you have chosen not to be vaccinated, don't wish to disclose your vaccination status, or you are not eligible for a vaccine this will not affect your access to care though staff may use additional PPE to ensure your safety.

Remote/Alternative Care

We may use remote care (telehealth, email, phone calls, Zoom meetings) to deliver some services.

We will advise on a case-by-case basis if this option is suitable for you

We may also use things such as Skype, Facetime, and other online chat services to answer any queries and provide care where possible

Keeping in touch with the SCIP

We will continue to post notices on our web-site (www.scip.co.nz) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/southernCochlearImplantProgramme) if there are any change to these plans.

If you have any questions about how these changes may affect your cochlear implant care, these can be forwarded to either office, through one of these channels;

Christchurch

Email: reception@scip.co.nz
Phone: 0800 500 405
Text: 027 355 3041
Web-site: scip.co.nz/contact

Lower Hutt

Email: scip.wellington@scip.co.nz
Phone: 0800 504 405
Text: 027 589 9853
Web-site: scip.co.nz/contact

We apologize for any inconvenience caused by these changes.

Please appreciate we are trying to ensure the safety of staff, patients, and community at this uncertain time.

Where to get information

The Ministry of Health website is your best source of information because it is updated daily. The Ministry of Health also have a Facebook page: @minhealthnz and a Twitter channel @minhealthnz to alert people to key updates and messages specifically about COVID-19.

Free dedicated COVID-19 Healthline number 0800 358 5453

This Healthline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. People calling that line will be able to talk with a member of the National Telehealth Service. They have access to interpreters. You should call this dedicated number for any COVID-19 health advice and information, any questions you have about COVID-19 or need information about self-isolation.