

BioNTech vaccine available at eight private healthcare institutions starting today (with photos)

Members of the public, starting from today (December 6), can make appointments to receive the BioNTech vaccine at 24 vaccination venues of the eight private healthcare institutions that have enrolled in the BioNTech vaccination pilot scheme. The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Patrick Nip, visited one of the participating clinics to view its arrangements in the provision of BioNTech and Sinovac vaccination services at different floors today. He also spoke with the clinic's operator and members of the public who got vaccinated at the clinic to know more about their views towards the scheme.

The Government launched the pilot scheme for members of the public to receive the BioNTech vaccine at eight private healthcare institutions with a view to further facilitating vaccination by expanding the vaccination network of the BioNTech vaccine and providing more channels for vaccination. In addition, members of the public can receive the Sinovac vaccine from private doctors and clinics participating in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. They can make appointments with the relevant private healthcare institutions and clinics directly without going through the Government's website. Information on enquiry hotlines and vaccination venues is available at the thematic website of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk/en/programme).

Mr Nip said the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme is now providing the vaccination service through a variety of vaccination venues, and the launch of non-governmental venues providing vaccination service using the BioNTech vaccine is an example. Getting vaccinated with either the Sinovac vaccine or the BioNTech vaccine at the private clinics under the programme is free of charge. Other vaccination venues include 11 COVID-19 Vaccination Stations at public hospitals, a vaccination vehicle operated as a mobile vaccination station, designated clinics under the Hospital Authority and 21 Community Vaccination Centres.

Mr Nip appealed to members of the public to get vaccinated as soon as possible to protect themselves against the threat posed by mutant strains. A high vaccination rate can especially protect elderly persons to reduce the risk of falling seriously ill and dying should one be infected, reduce the risk of a community outbreak and help avoid frequent suspensions if quarantine-free travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong is resumed.

The Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases under the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health and the expert advisory panel highly recommend elderly persons to receive COVID-19 vaccination, pointing

out that all elderly persons who have previously received influenza vaccines can safely receive COVID-19 vaccines. Elderly persons or residents with chronic illnesses should receive COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible as long as they are not suffering from acute illnesses.

Before making an appointment, members of the public should take note of a minimum interval of 14 days between COVID-19 vaccination and any other vaccination (including seasonal influenza vaccination).

