

# Public urged to donate blood as inventories run low amid COVID-19 epidemic

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hong Kong Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service (BTS) announced today (March 18) that the blood inventories have been depleted to low levels and appealed to the public to come forward to donate blood as soon as possible to replenish the blood inventories for patients in need of blood transfusion.

Amid the pressure of the fifth wave of the epidemic, social activities are reduced and blood collection has therefore dropped significantly. With collection barely reaching 200 to 300 units daily since the beginning of March, the supply is not sufficient to meet the daily blood demand from local hospitals. A sufficient blood supply is crucial at the Accident and Emergency Departments, for treating critical illnesses such as through organ transplants and emergency operations, and to meet blood demand from thalassaemia and blood cancer patients.

The BTS has updated its blood donation eligibility criteria based on the latest information about COVID-19. Members of the public who had contracted COVID-19 (confirmed positive via rapid antigen test or nucleic acid test), or had close contact with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case, depending on their symptoms and recovery, can donate blood again after a minimum deferral period of 14 days. For details, please visit [www5.ha.org.hk/rcbts/news/news20220316](http://www5.ha.org.hk/rcbts/news/news20220316).

The BTS follows stringent measures to safeguard blood safety and infection control. All blood collection sites are thoroughly disinfected and donors are required to put on masks, check their temperature and sanitise their hands before entering the donation areas. Blood donors are advised to make appointments by calling the BTS Booking Hotline on 2710 1333 (during office hours) or donor centres, or by booking online or via the "HK Blood" mobile app. For details, please visit [www.ha.org.hk/rcbts](http://www.ha.org.hk/rcbts).