

SWD announces restricted visiting arrangement for RCHEs and RCHDs

In the light of the latest epidemic situation, and the premise of maintaining reduction of social contact and carrying out infection-preventive measures, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) announced today (April 30) that a restricted visiting arrangement for residential care homes for the elderly and residential care homes for persons with disabilities will be implemented from May 10. Institutions and visitors shall observe the following arrangements:

- Visitors (except official visitors) should make appointments with the institutions prior to their visits;
- Visitors who have completed two doses of COVID-19 vaccination for 14 days, apart from presenting their vaccination records, are required to either present a negative COVID-19 test (see Note 1) result obtained within 72 hours before the scheduled visit or provide a negative COVID-19 rapid antigen test result within 24 hours before the visit. Regarding the COVID-19 rapid antigen tests, visitors have to purchase one of the COVID-19 rapid antigen test products designated by the Government (see Note 2) and conduct the test at home on their own. They need to bring along a photo of the person being tested (namely the visitor) with the negative result and the date and time of the test shown in it, together with the product insert and packing of the rapid antigen test kit used, to give to the staff members of the institutions for checking;
- Visitors who have not been vaccinated or only received their first dose or completed two-dose vaccination for less than 14 days before the visit are required to present a negative COVID-19 test result obtained within 72 hours before the visit;
- Visitors who have not been vaccinated, have not completed two-dose vaccination or do not possess a negative COVID-19 test result obtained within 72 hours before the visit (except official visitors) but need to pay urgent visits to institutions for compassionate reasons must provide a negative COVID-19 test result within two days after the visit;
- Institutions must take prudent and effective measures to reduce infection risks, including confining the number of visitors per resident to not more than one each time (except official visits) to avoid crowds gathering, ensuring visitors maintain an appropriate social distance from each other, arranging visits to be conducted at a designated place with proper segregation and frequent sanitisation, conducting checking to ensure that visitors have met the relevant requirements and keeping visitor records accordingly; and

- Visitors before entering an institution should have their body temperature checked, perform hand hygiene and wear surgical masks. During visits, visitors should wear surgical masks at all times. Also, residents should wear surgical masks and eye protection (goggles/face shields) as far as practicable.

Institutions should continue to enhance their communication with the residents and their relatives on the visiting arrangement and relevant measures. They should also visit the dedicated webpage on COVID-19 (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/index.html) from time to time to keep a close watch on the Government's latest public health information.

Note 1: Refers to the polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid test for coronavirus disease 2019.

Note 2: As at April 29, 2021, according to information provided by the Food and Health Bureau (FHB), the designated COVID-19 rapid antigen test products are: (1) INDICAID COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Test (Phase Scientific International Limited); (2) SARS-CoV-2 Rapid Antigen Test Nasal (Roche Diagnostics (Hong Kong) Limited); and (3) Panbio COVID-19 Ag Rapid Test Device (Abbott Laboratories Limited). The SWD will update the designated product list based on the FHB's recommendation and make announcements through the SWD's webpage, if needed.