

15th round of compulsory testing for staff members of RCHEs, RCHDs and nursing homes to commence shortly

The Government today (May 11) announced that the 15th round of compulsory testing for staff members of residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs), residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs) and nursing homes will commence shortly.

In accordance with section 10(1) of the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) (the Regulation), the Secretary for Food and Health issued a compulsory testing notice yesterday (May 10), requiring persons who are employed by and will be on duty at RCHEs, RCHDs, nursing homes and day service units attached to the premises of residential care homes during the period from May 28 to June 10, 2021, or who will provide services to residents or users through hire-of-service contracts with residential care homes and the aforementioned units during that period (including full-time, part-time and relief staff), to undergo polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid tests for COVID-19 during the period from May 14 to 27, 2021, according to the requirements and procedure set out in the notice (the Specified Test). However, persons who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course (i.e. received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine 14 days before the end of the testing period) are not required to undergo the Specified Test.

The staff of the aforementioned institutions may choose the following means to undergo the Specified Test:

- (1) To undergo the Specified Test in any of the Community Testing Centres (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en), Temporary Testing Centres (if any) (see the list at www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_supportser/sub_ttc), or mobile specimen collection stations (if any) (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html) in accordance with the instructions given by the staff at the centre/station;
- (2) To undergo the Specified Test as arranged by institution operators at a laboratory listed on the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories RTPCR.pdf) and as instructed by the staff of the laboratory;
- (3) To obtain a specimen bottle from one of the 121 post offices, 47 general out-patient clinics of the Hospital Authority or vending machines set up at 20 MTR stations, collect a deep throat saliva sample in the specimen bottle as per the guidelines provided together with the specimen bottle, and return the specimen bottle with the sample (see the specimen bottles distribution and specimen collection locations and times at

www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html);

(4) To undergo the Specified Test at general out-patient clinics of the Hospital Authority as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority; or

(5) To self-arrange testing provided by a laboratory listed on the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" at their own expense (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories RTPCR.pdf).

Any person who fails to comply with the testing notice commits an offence and may be subject to a fixed penalty of \$5,000. He or she would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the order is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

A spokesman for the Social Welfare Department (SWD) said that the SWD and the Department of Health would issue letters to institutions to inform them of the relevant arrangements and requirements. The spokesman reminded that staff of the said institutions who would undergo testing at community testing centres should make an advance booking via the community testing centre booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk) for the free testing service. In addition, institution operators should remind their staff members to properly keep the SMS notifications of their test results or their test result reports.

Institution operators are required to keep records of their staff having received the Specified Test and the results within the time frame specified by the Government. They are also required to keep the list of staff members who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course. Institution operators also have to co-operate with Checking Officers (Compulsory Testing) of the SWD who are enforcing the Regulation at residential care homes.

The Government will continue to monitor the epidemic situation and make adjustments to the aforementioned testing policy after taking the overall anti-epidemic measures into account. Although staff members who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course are exempted from the regular compulsory testing, they can still receive free testing if they voluntarily choose to undergo the test.

Government to gazette compulsory testing notice

The Government will exercise the power under the Prevention and Control

of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and publish in the Gazette a compulsory testing notice, which requires any person who had been present at 43 specified premises during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau reminded the public that persons who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course would be taken to have complied with the requirements set out in the compulsory testing notices and hence are not required to undergo compulsory testing. Completion of the vaccination course in general means having received two doses of COVID-19 vaccine 14 days ago.

Since there were outbreaks of upper respiratory tract infection and/or influenza-like illness in 43 schools, and the symptoms of the concerned diseases are similar to those of COVID-19, for prudence's sake, the 43 schools are covered in the compulsory testing notice today (May 10). Under existing practice, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) will provide these kindergartens and schools with stool specimen bottles or deep throat saliva specimen collection packs direct.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are at Annex 1.

In addition, subsequent to the announcement by the CHP on the updated quarantine arrangements of local COVID-19 cases with the N501Y mutant strain, persons who resided or worked within the same building as the residence of relevant cases and had been released from the quarantine centres will be subject to compulsory testing on the 3rd, 7th, 12th and 19th day counting from the day on which the confirmed case left the relevant building. They will also be required to undergo self-monitoring until the 21st day. Details of the buildings and dates of testing are listed at Annex 2. Relevant persons have to undergo testing on specified dates.

In accordance with the compulsory testing notice issued earlier, all household members of close contacts are required to undergo compulsory testing. Any person who had lived with a person placed under quarantine pursuant to section 22 of the Prevention and Control of Disease Regulation (Cap. 599A) (person under quarantine) in the same residential unit on the date of commencement of quarantine or during the 14 days before that day, and who becomes aware of the quarantine of the person under quarantine when the relevant quarantine has not yet been completed, has to undergo testing within two days of him or her becoming aware that the person under quarantine has been placed under quarantine and report to the Government the result of the test by phone (at 6275 6901), fax (at 2530 5872) or email (ct@csb.gov.hk) within three days of undergoing the test.

The spokesman thanked the general public for their co-operation in undergoing compulsory testing for fighting the virus together.

During the period from May 1 to May 9, over 340 000 FDHs have been tested at 21 community testing centres (CTCs) and mobile specimen collection

stations or submitted deep throat saliva specimen.

Currently, there are a total of 21 CTCs providing testing service for the public, including free service for persons subject to compulsory testing. Booking and walk-in services are available. Members of the public only need to provide simple personal information on the 24-hour booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk/en). Booking status of centres for the coming week will be shown for public's selection of suitable testing centre and time slot for testing. The testing centres will accord priority to serve individuals with advance bookings. The number of tests available for appointments at CTCs has been increased to over 46 000 per day, and additional manpower has been deployed to serve the public. As of 6pm today, there are around 18 000 booking places available for tomorrow (May 11) at the 21 CTCs, and around 71% and 84% booking places for the coming 7 days and 14 days respectively. Members of the public may call the testing centres for enquiries on the availability of bookings or walk-in quotas before visiting the centres.

The Government will set up a mobile specimen collection station at Block R of Allway Gardens in Tsuen Wan tomorrow for persons subject to compulsory testing. The service period of the mobile specimen collection stations at King George V Memorial Park, Kowloon, MacPherson Playground in Mong Kok and Arthur Street Temporary Playground in Yau Ma Tei will be extended to May 17 (Monday).

Coupled with the 21 CTCs, there will be a total of 38 CTCs/mobile specimen collection stations in various districts tomorrow to provide free service for persons subject to compulsory testing, and the testing capacity should be sufficient to meet the demand. The opening dates and operating hours of the mobile specimen collection stations in various districts providing free COVID-19 nucleic acid testing services for the general public are stated in Annex 3. Persons subject to compulsory testing, and those with "LeaveHomeSafe" COVID-19 exposure notification or SMS notification from the Centre for Health Protection reminding them to undergo testing as soon as possible may receive free testing at community testing centres or mobile specimen collection stations (if the service scope is applicable).

Persons subject to compulsory testing may choose to undergo testing via the following routes:

1. To visit any of the mobile specimen collection stations (see the list and target groups (if applicable) at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html) for testing;
2. To attend any of the community testing centres (see the list at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en);
3. To obtain a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from any of the 121 post offices, vending machines set up at 20 MTR stations or 47 designated general outpatient clinics (GOPCs) of the Hospital Authority and return the specimen to one of the designated specimen collection points (see the distribution points and times, and the specimen collection points and times, at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html);
4. To undergo testing at any of the GOPCs of the Hospital Authority as

instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority;

5. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the Department of Health (DH) and can issue SMS notifications in respect of test results (see the list at www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories_RTPCR.pdf); or

6. To use a specimen bottle distributed to the relevant specified premises by the CHP (if applicable), and return the specimen bottle with the sample collected as per relevant guidelines.

The spokesman cautioned that testing received at Accident and Emergency Departments of the Hospital Authority or during hospital stays, or testing provided by private laboratories which cannot issue SMS notifications in respect of test results, does not comply with the requirements of the aforementioned compulsory testing notice.

"If persons subject to compulsory testing have symptoms, they should seek medical attention immediately and undergo testing as instructed by a medical professional. They should not attend the mobile specimen collection stations or the community testing centres."

Persons subject to compulsory testing must keep the SMS notification containing the result of the test for checking by a law enforcement officer when the officer requires the persons to provide information about their undergoing the specified test.

Furthermore, persons subject to testing under the compulsory testing notices should, as far as reasonably practicable, take appropriate personal disease prevention measures including wearing a mask and maintaining hand hygiene, and, unless for the purpose of undergoing the specified test, stay at their place of residence and avoid going out until the test result is ascertained as far as possible.

Any enquiries on compulsory testing arrangements may be addressed to the hotline at 6275 6901, which operates daily from 9am to 6pm. If persons subject to compulsory testing plan to conduct testing at any of the community testing centres, they can check the centre's appointment status in advance. The hotlines of the community testing centres are available at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/info.

The Government will continue to trace possibly infected persons who had been to the relevant premises, and seriously verify whether they had complied with the testing notices. Any person who fails to comply with the testing notices commits an offence and may be fined a fixed penalty of \$5,000. The person would also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Failure to comply with the order is an offence and the offender would be liable to a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months.

Relevant officers of different government departments are empowered to perform certain functions under the relevant Regulations under the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance (Cap. 599), including requesting individuals

to provide information and assistance when necessary. Any person who fails to comply with the relevant request commits an offence and would be liable to a fine at level 3 (\$10,000). Collection and use of any personal data for conducting COVID-19 tests must meet the requirements under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486). Government departments or testing service providers which handle the relevant information may provide the data to the DH or other relevant departments for anti-epidemic purposes as necessary. The workflow does not involve the provision of any personal data to organisations or persons outside Hong Kong.

The spokesman said, "The Government urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health conditions, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or contacted confirmed cases), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons."

[COVID-19 Vaccination Programme statistics](#)

The COVID-19 Vaccination Programme has been implemented for the 74th day since February 26, 2021.

So far, about 1 776 500 doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered for members of the public (please see Annex 1). Among them, about 1 087 200 persons have received their first dose, with about 481 800 persons receiving the Sinovac vaccine and about 605 400 persons receiving the BioNTech vaccine. About 689 300 persons have received their second dose, with about 344 600 persons receiving the Sinovac vaccine and about 344 700 persons receiving the BioNTech vaccine.

In the last 24 hours ending at 8pm today (May 10), about 34 700 persons have received vaccination and about 12 000 new vaccination bookings have been made online, detailed as follows:

(i) About 4 900 persons received their first dose of the Sinovac vaccine, including about 2 300 persons vaccinated at Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs) and about 2 600 persons at private doctors and clinics participating in the programme;

(ii) about 3 100 persons received their second dose of the Sinovac vaccine, including about 1 500 persons vaccinated at CVCs and about 1 600 persons at private doctors and clinics;

(iii) about 10 800 persons received their first dose of the BioNTech vaccine at CVCs, and about 16 000 persons received their second dose of the BioNTech

vaccine;

(iv) the overall percentage of people who have received the Sinovac vaccine at CVCs is about 94 per cent; while the overall percentage of people who have received the BioNTech vaccine at CVCs is about 97 per cent; and

(v) about 2 900 persons have made online bookings for receiving their first and second doses of the Sinovac vaccine, while about 9 100 persons have made online bookings for receiving their first and second doses of the BioNTech vaccine.

In the last 24 hours ending at 0.00am today, there were seven cases of ambulance transfers to hospitals. Among them, four persons were discharged, one person was admitted for observation and two persons were discharged against medical advice (please see Annex 2).

As background information, in the last 24 hours ending at 0.00am today, there were 46 cases of stroke or myocardial infarction that required admission to the Intensive Care Unit, Acute Stroke Unit and Cardiac Care Unit of public hospitals. The state of new cases admitted to the wards concerned is provided as a cross reference to enhance fuller public understanding of cases of the kind recorded on vaccine recipients.

[CHP investigates two outbreaks of upper respiratory tract infection](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (May 10) investigating two outbreaks of upper respiratory tract infection (URTI), and appeals to members of the public and staff of institutions to stay alert and maintain strict personal and environmental hygiene.

Details of the outbreaks are listed in the table below:

Type of school (District)	Number of people affected and details of medical attention	Earliest onset date	Symptoms
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Case 1: Kindergarten (Wong Tai Sin District)	Nine boys and 15 girls (aged 4 to 6); 15 of them sought medical attention; all are in stable condition and none required hospitalisation	May 7	Cough, runny nose, fever and sore throat
Case 2: Kindergarten (Sham Shui Po District)	13 boys and nine girls (aged 3 to 5); 20 of them sought medical attention and one required hospitalisation and was discharged; all are in stable condition	April 20	Cough, runny nose, fever and sore throat

Officers of the CHP have advised the kindergartens to adopt necessary infection control measures against respiratory infections. The kindergartens have been put under medical surveillance. In addition, since the symptoms of URTI are similar to those of COVID-19, for prudence's sake, the above kindergarten of case 1 and the kindergarten of case 2 are covered in the compulsory testing notice (CTN) on May 10 and April 22 respectively, to exclude the possibility of COVID-19 infection. The kindergartens were required to suspend teaching activities for at least five days for cleaning and executing the CTN.

The public should maintain good personal and environmental hygiene against influenza and other respiratory illnesses and note the following:

- Receive a seasonal influenza vaccination for personal protection;
- Surgical masks can prevent transmission of respiratory viruses from ill persons. It is essential for persons who are symptomatic (even if having mild symptoms) to wear a surgical mask;
- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Avoid touching one's eyes, mouth and nose;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly whenever possibly contaminated;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub;
- Cover the nose and mouth with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly into a lidded rubbish bin, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly; and

- Maintain a balanced diet, exercise regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

Members of the public, particularly children, the elderly and those with chronic diseases, should wear a face mask and consult a doctor promptly if they develop symptoms of respiratory tract infection.

[Speech by CS at Europe Day Reception \(English only\) \(with video\)](#)

Following is the video speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at the Europe Day Reception this evening (May 10):

Mr Gnocchi (Head of the European Union (EU) Office to Hong Kong and Macao, Mr Thomas Gnocchi), distinguished guests, friends of the European Union and Hong Kong, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. I am most honoured to join you all to celebrate Europe Day.

Europe Day celebrates the remarkable success of the European Union, a singular economic and political institution uniting 27 nations with a shared goal: the promotion of peace, stability and prosperity.

Indeed, peace and the promise it engenders are aspirations shared by people around the world. When the European Union was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012, it used the prize money – and then doubled it, to 2 million Euros – to help children in conflict zones.

A decade later, while it is debatable whether global conflict has lessened, it is clear that we live in a world beset with strife. Trade wars continue to create animosity and mistrust, and a virus has devastated the global economy and international community.

COVID-19 is clearly the biggest challenge that we have known since World War II – a global responsibility as much as a global scourge. As the World Health Organization has said, the pandemic is, and I quote, "a stark and painful reminder that nobody is safe until everyone is safe".

President Xi Jinping, speaking at the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference last month, is acutely mindful of that reality and the responsibility that comes with it. China, he said, "will continue to carry out anti-COVID co-operation with the World Health Organization and other

countries, honour its commitment of making vaccines a global public good, and do more to help developing countries defeat the virus".

The European Council is no less aware of the critical need for a global response. Indeed, it has taken the lead in calling for an international pandemic treaty, one "guided by a spirit of collective solidarity, anchored in the principles of fairness, inclusiveness and transparency".

However nations and institutions respond, it is clear that we must come together if we are to ensure equitable and timely access to vaccines and related diagnostic tools, medicine and expertise.

That demands concerted co-operation on any number of levels. My heartfelt thanks to the consular officials in the EU office and member states, together with EU citizens here in Hong Kong, for getting vaccinated. The more people getting vaccinated, the greater the effectiveness of our anti-epidemic effort. That is a critical step in achieving herd immunity as soon as possible and enabling the community to gradually return to normality.

Despite COVID-19's adverse impact, Hong Kong and the EU have enjoyed a splendid bilateral relationship. Indeed, the EU was the third largest merchandise trading partner of Hong Kong in the world. I am pleased to note that our bilateral merchandise trade last year was over 46 billion Euros. Let me add that some 1 600 EU companies maintain an office here. More than half of them have chosen Hong Kong as the base of their regional headquarters or regional offices. I am confident that our business and investment ties will begin to pick up again in the second half of this year.

Beyond trade and business, our cultural exchanges with the EU are thriving in Hong Kong. I am heartened by the EU Office's continuing community engagement. The 12th edition of the European Union Film Festival, which ran through the last two weeks of April, featured 19 award-winning films – a treat for cinema lovers in Hong Kong.

I look forward to enhancing our future co-operation with the European Union, in arts, films, music, exhibitions and much else.

The EU, after all, has long been a welcome force for stability, in Europe and throughout the world. Please rest assured that Hong Kong will continue to connect the European Union with the Mainland and Asia in general – for business and investment, of course, but also, no less important, for communication, co-operation and mutual understanding.

Happy Europe Day!