

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 14 specified premises and persons exempted from compulsory quarantine who had taken the specified flight during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test.

In view of a local preliminary positive case with unknown sources of infection involving N501Y mutation strain recorded today (April 29), five premises where the preliminary positive case had patronised are included in the compulsory testing notice. Furthermore, two imported cases involving N501Y mutation strain have been recorded on flight CX906 which arrived at Hong Kong from Manila, the Philippines on April 14. For prudence's sake, persons exempted by the Chief Secretary for Administration from compulsory quarantine under section 4(1) of the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E) who had taken that flight have to undergo compulsory testing by April 30.

In addition, since there were outbreaks of upper respiratory tract infection (URTI) in nine schools, and the symptoms of URTI are similar to those of COVID-19, for prudence's sake, the nine schools are also covered in the compulsory testing notice.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are at Annex 1.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau reminded the public that 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 Government will set up a mobile specimen collection station at Fu Tung Estate in Tung Chung tomorrow (April 30) for persons subject to compulsory testing. The operating hours of the mobile specimen collection station at Tung Chung North Park will be slightly adjusted on May 1 (Saturday), starting service at 1pm and closing at 8pm; the operating hours

will resume normal from May 2 (Sunday), i.e. from 10am to 8pm.

The service period of the mobile specimen collection stations at On Hing Playground in Yuen Long, Tin Shui Sports Centre in Tin Shui Wai and Kin Sang Community Hall in Tuen Mun will be extended to May 10 (Monday), and that of the stations at Edinburgh Place in Central and Sha Tsui Road Playground in Tsuen Wan will be extended to May 16 (Sunday).

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 2. Apart from mobile specimen collection stations, persons subject to compulsory testing can also choose to attend any of the community testing centres in all districts to receive testing free of charge. Persons 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 Centre for Health Protection (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 63rd day since February 26, 2021.

So far, about 1 377 600 doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered for members of the public (please see Annex 1). Among them, about 897 100 persons have received their first dose, with about 423 800 persons receiving the Sinovac vaccine and about 473 400 persons receiving the BioNTech vaccine. About 480 500 persons have received their second dose, with about 304 900 persons receiving the Sinovac vaccine and about 175 700 persons receiving the BioNTech vaccine.

In the last 24 hours ending at 8pm today (April 29), about 25 700 persons have received vaccination and about 15 100 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 2 200 persons vaccinated at Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs) and about 2 700 persons at private doctors and clinics participating in the programme;

(ii) about 4 900 persons received their second dose of the Sinovac vaccine, including about 2 900 persons vaccinated at CVCs and about 1 900 persons at private doctors and clinics;

(iii) about 7 900 persons received their first dose of the BioNTech vaccine at CVCs, and about 8 000 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 96 per cent; while the overall percentage of people who have received the BioNTech vaccine at CVCs is about 97 per cent; and

(v) about 4 000 persons have made online bookings for receiving their first and second doses of the Sinovac vaccine, while about 11 100 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 eight cases of ambulance transfers to hospitals. Among them, five 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 40 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.

Police "Beat App" to trial launch in phases for shortening "stop-and-search time"

Police will launch a pilot run of the fourth generation of Command and Control Communications System Mobile Application "Beat App" by phases starting from early May 2021.

In addition to communicating with the Regional Command and Control Centre via the wireless telecommunication devices to ascertain if the person is wanted or reported missing, police officers can use "Beat App" to read HKID cards and international passports by using the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology, or Exit-Entry Permit for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macau by QR codes. For other identification documents, Police can use hand-writing and voice input to conduct the enquiry.

The "Beat App" can only be installed on the official mobile phones of the Force. There is a laser engraved Police logo on the phone and Police will continue to devise new differentiating features for the sake of recognition. The "Beat App" will only read the card face data (e.g. name, date of birth and date of issue etc). It is unable to read data contained in the chip of the identification documents, take or store any photo of it. Besides, the screen capture function is deactivated and no data can be duplicated when using the "Beat App". The database enquiry function of the application will only be activated when police officers are on duty. When accessing the database of the application, a digital watermark with date, time and the identification number of the police officer will be shown on each page.

"Beat App" can streamline the enquiry process, enhance operational efficiency and safety as well as shorten citizens' waiting time when being stopped and searched. It also alleviates the tremendous workload in the Regional Command and Control Centre so that more resources could be deployed for emergency services.

The "Beat App" provides an additional means for the frontline officers to conduct checks on person/vehicle/vessel, reducing officers' time in transcribing data and enhancing the accuracy of data checking. There is no change on the overall stop-and-search procedures. The data being checked by frontline officers during "stop-and-search" remains the same as before.

Regarding information security and protection of personal data, Police

have clear and strict internal guidelines regulating the use, storage and retention of personal data collected by officers while performing duties and ensure they comply with the regulations stipulated under the "Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance" (Chapter 486)". Police would take all practical steps to safeguard personal data from unauthorized or accidental access, processing or use. All Force members are required to strictly adhere to the laws and regulations, notwithstanding on or off duty.

Phase one will involve part of Regional Emergency Units and District Traffic Teams to participate in the pilot run. If the pilot run is smooth, it will then formally rollout to all Regional Emergency Units and five selected District Traffic Teams in late May. Phase two will be launched in August 2021 and the use of "Beat App" will be extended to all Police Tactical Units, part of Patrol Sub-units and Marine Region.

CHP follows up on COVID-19 positive cases of Tower 11, Carmel Cove, Caribbean Coast in Tung Chung

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (April 29) said that it is following up on a positive case of COVID-19 with the preliminary test result involving N501Y mutant strain. As N501Y mutant strain is with high transmissibility, the CHP decided to carry out prudent measures on infection control and prevention to arrange compulsory quarantine for asymptomatic residents of all units on all floors of the building concerned, so as to stop the potential risk of spread of N501Y mutant strain.

The above case involves a 39-year-old woman who is a domestic helper and a 10-month-old baby girl who lives with her is also a positive case. They resided at Tower 11, Carmel Cove, Caribbean Coast, 1 Kin Tung Road, Tung Chung, and the CHP will transfer asymptomatic residents of all units on all floors of the building (involving about 400 units) to quarantine centres; symptomatic residents will be sent to the hospital for treatment. They will undergo compulsory quarantine for 21 days.

Meanwhile, as the positive case involving N501Y mutant strain had visited St. Thomas the Apostle Church at 5 Tsing Luk Street in Tsing Yi on April 11 and 18, a compulsory testing notice will be issued to require people who have stayed there on either April 11 or 18 (including visitors and workers), to undergo testing by May 1. The CHP has also arranged compulsory quarantine for the close contacts who had attended church gathering with the woman, and has informed household members of close contacts to undergo compulsory testing in accordance with the compulsory testing notice. The CHP urged those who have completed the testing to avoid going out until the test

result is ascertained.

As today's positive case and the confirmed case (11730) involving N501Y mutant strain earlier are both domestic helpers, the CHP urged employers to remind their domestic helpers to avoid gatherings, food sharing and other social activities. If they have to attend gatherings, they should wear a mask at all times, wash their hands frequently and maintain social distancing so as to safeguard their personal health. Employers are also urged to pay attention to the health condition of their domestic helpers and they should seek medical attention immediately if symptoms develop.

The CHP said that as there is a locally infected case of COVID-19 with unknown source involving N501Y mutant strain, it is imperative for people to get vaccinated. As the Government has launched the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme, the CHP appeals to members of the public to get vaccinated as early as possible to protect themselves and others. Details of the programme can be found at the designated website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk).

Advisory Panel on COVID-19 Vaccines convenes meeting to conduct continuous benefit-risk analysis of authorised COVID-19 vaccines

The Advisory Panel on COVID-19 Vaccines (Advisory Panel) convened a meeting today (April 29) to conduct continuous benefit-risk analysis of the authorised COVID-19 vaccines. The meeting was chaired by convenor Professor Wallace Lau Chak-sing.

The Secretary for Food and Health authorised two COVID-19 vaccines, namely the Comirnaty vaccine and the Sinovac vaccine, in accordance with the Prevention and Control of Disease (Use of Vaccines) Regulation (Cap. 599K) (the Regulation) on January 25 and February 18 respectively. To comply with the conditions of authorisation, the authorisation applicants are required to submit the latest clinical data on the vaccines, safety update reports and quality certification documents, etc. for continuous review and monitoring.

The Advisory Panel held a meeting today to review the continuous benefit-risk balance of the two authorised vaccines. After reviewing all the latest available clinical and safety data related to the Comirnaty and Sinovac vaccines, the Advisory Panel still considered that the benefits of the two vaccines outweighed the risks. There was no need to recommend changes regarding the use of these two vaccines.

Regarding the Comirnaty vaccine, the latest data from continuous Phase 3 clinical study and data from vaccine recipients indicated that the efficacy of the vaccine maintained at around 90 per cent seven days after administration of the second dose. Taking into consideration the local and overseas safety data, including safety reports submitted by the applicant, the Advisory Panel considered that there was no new significant safety signal identified, though continuous monitoring was required. The Advisory Panel also noted that the quality issue related to packaging defects of the vial caps of a batch of Comirnaty vaccines imported had been promptly rectified. The vaccine manufacturer confirmed that the quality of the vaccines was intact and there was no evidence indicating that there were any safety risks for the affected batch of vaccines. The quality of the subsequent batches of Comirnaty vaccine imported has already passed the certification and appropriate testing for quality control.

With regard to Sinovac vaccine, preliminary data on vaccine efficacy from a study conducted in Chile indicated that the efficacy of preventing symptomatic COVID-19 was 66.96 per cent upon 14 days after two doses of vaccination. Taking into consideration the local and overseas safety data available, including safety reports submitted, the Advisory Panel considered that there was no new significant safety signal identified, though continuous monitoring was required. The quality of the batches of Sinovac vaccine imported has already passed the certification and appropriate testing for quality control.

The Advisory Panel will submit the views to the Secretary for Food and Health. Relevant information will be uploaded to the website of the Food and Health Bureau later on.

"The Government will continue to ensure that the authorised vaccines satisfy the criteria of safety, efficacy and quality, and keep on disseminating to the public and relevant stakeholders the latest safety and scientific information on the relevant vaccines in a timely manner," the Government spokesman said.