

Updated blood donation precautionary measures in response to COVID-19

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hong Kong Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service (BTS) has established a policy to ensure blood safety. The BTS regularly reviews blood donation arrangements for prospective donors who return from areas with potential risks of infectious diseases. In response to the latest development of COVID-19, the spokesperson for the BTS today (March 11) announced the following precautionary measures to be implemented with immediate effect:

- Members of the public who have recently visited a place with active community transmissions of COVID-19 should be deferred from blood donations for 28 days from their date of departure.

Currently, areas with active community transmissions include:

- Mainland China
- Korea
- Italy
- Iran
- France (Bourgogne-Franche-Comté and Grand Est)
- Germany (Nordrhein-Westfalen)
- Spain (Madrid, La Rioja and País Vasco)
- Japan (Hokkaido)

The list of places with active community transmissions is available from the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) webpage, and will be updated from time to time:

www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/statistics_of_the_cases_novel_coronavirus_infection_en.pdf.

Meanwhile, the measures stated below continue to remain in effect:

- Members of the public who have had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 while that patient was symptomatic should be deferred from blood donation for 28 days; and
- Members of the public with confirmed COVID-19 should be deferred for 180 days after complete recovery.

The above arrangements are made after careful assessments and a thorough consideration of associated risks of blood safety by the Hospital Authority (BTS) Expert Panel on Blood and Blood Products Safety. The Expert Panel shall remain vigilant and will work closely with relevant departments to monitor

the latest developments, and to review in a timely manner related measures. Meanwhile, all blood donors are reminded that if they develop symptoms of fever, respiratory tract infection or pneumonia after a blood donation, they should seek medical advice and inform the healthcare staff of BTS as soon as possible at the following telephone numbers during office hours: 2710 1201, 2710 1243 and 2710 1298, or outside office hours at 2710 1210 or 2710 1234.