

# Government gazettes compulsory testing notice

The Government exercises the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and publishes in the Gazette a compulsory testing notice, which requires any person who had been present at 42 specified places during the specified period (persons subject to compulsory testing) to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test.

In view of a number of cases testing positive, 42 specified places are included in the compulsory testing notice. The Government strongly reminds members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo testing on time as required. Mobile specimen collection stations have been set up by the Government in different districts to facilitate testing to be conducted in compliance with the compulsory testing notice. The above compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well.

Persons who have tested positive in the past three months (including positive cases tested either by nucleic acid tests recorded by the Department of Health (DH) or by rapid antigen tests (RATs) that have been self-declared to the DH) do not need to undergo compulsory testing. For those who are subject to compulsory testing (save for those who have declared their positive RAT results as mentioned above), they must undergo nucleic acid tests in accordance with relevant compulsory testing notices and cannot use RATs to fulfil the requirement of such notices. In other words, a negative RAT result cannot be deemed as fulfilling the compulsory testing requirement. Furthermore, unless a person subject to compulsory testing has obtained a medical certificate proving that he or she is unfit to undergo testing using a sample taken through combined nasal and throat swabs because of health reasons, the person cannot provide a deep throat saliva sample to fulfil the compulsory testing requirement.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are available on the Centre for Health Protection (CHP)'s website via the following link: [www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/ctn\\_20220524.pdf](http://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/ctn_20220524.pdf).

If any persons test positive under compulsory testing, such positive cases will be handled in the same manner as in those identified through other nucleic acid tests or self-declared through RATs. Their isolation arrangements (as well as the quarantine arrangements of their household members) are no different from other positive cases.

Persons subject to compulsory testing in accordance with a compulsory testing notice must go to any of the mobile specimen collection stations, community testing centres (CTCs) or recognised local medical testing institutions to undergo professional swab sampling in fulfilling the requirements for compulsory testing. Young children may continue to undergo

the test using a stool specimen. For details on obtaining stool specimen bottles, please refer to the COVID-19 thematic website: [www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/Stool\\_bottle\\_collection\\_points.pdf](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/Stool_bottle_collection_points.pdf).

If Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 3 or above, the Red or Black Rainstorm Warning Signal or the post-super typhoon "extreme conditions" announcement by the Government is in force at any time during the period for undergoing the compulsory testing, the period for undergoing the compulsory testing will be extended for one day.

The Comirnaty and CoronaVac vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from COVID-19. They can provide protection to those vaccinated to prevent serious complications and even death after infection. The Government appeals to persons who are not yet vaccinated to get vaccinated without delay. The Government is working towards the goal of boosting the vaccination rates of children, teenagers and the elderly so that they can be protected by the vaccines as early as possible. Furthermore, the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases under the CHP of the DH has earlier updated the consensus interim recommendations, and persons aged 60 or above who have taken three doses of vaccine are recommended to receive an additional dose (i.e. fourth dose) of either Comirnaty vaccine or CoronaVac vaccine at least three months after their last dose. Members of the public who are eligible should get the fourth dose as early as possible for better protection.

CTCs provide testing services for the public. 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](http://www.communitytest.gov.hk/en)). The system shows the booking status of the centres for the coming two weeks to facilitate the public's planning and selection of a suitable testing centre and a time slot for testing. The testing centres will accord priority to serve individuals with advance bookings. As of 6pm today (May 24), there was around 97 per cent availability for booking places for the coming two weeks. 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 service period of the mobile specimen collection station at Wah Kwai Estate in Pok Fu Lam will be extended to May 26 (Thursday). Separately, ticketing machines have been installed in a number of service points for on-site ticket arrangement. Members of the public who have obtained a ticket can visit the CTC website ([www.communitytest.gov.hk/en](http://www.communitytest.gov.hk/en)) to check the real-time queueing ticket status. Booking service is also provided for some large-scale mobile specimen collection stations, and members of the public may use the 24-hour booking system ([www.communitytest.gov.hk/en](http://www.communitytest.gov.hk/en)) to reserve a suitable time slot for testing.

Other than persons subject to compulsory testing, all members of the public may conduct free testing at CTCs or mobile specimen collection stations (if the service scope is applicable). The opening dates and operating hours of the mobile specimen collection stations are stated in the Annex.

Outdoor mobile specimen collection stations will be closed if the Strong Wind Signal No. 3 or Red Rainstorm Warning Signal has been issued, while all mobile specimen collection stations together with all CTCs will be closed when Tropical Cyclone Warning Signal No. 8 or above or the Black Rainstorm Warning Signal is in force.

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

(a) For tests which require using a sample taken through combined nasal and throat swabs

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](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html)) for testing;

2. To attend any of the CTCs (see the list at [www.communitytest.gov.hk/en](http://www.communitytest.gov.hk/en));

3. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the 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](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/List_of_recognised_laboratories_RTPCR.pdf)), and the relevant sample must be taken through combined nasal and throat swabs; or

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

(b) For persons holding a medical certificate issued by a registered medical practitioner proving that they are unfit to undergo testing using a sample taken through combined nasal and throat swabs because of health reasons

1. To obtain a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from post offices, vending machines set up at MTR stations or designated general out-patient 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](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html));

2. To undergo testing at any of the GOPCs of the Hospital Authority as instructed by a medical professional of the Hospital Authority; or

3. To self-arrange testing provided by private laboratories which are recognised by the DH and can issue SMS notifications in respect of test results.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau cautioned that testing received at the Accident and Emergency Departments of the Hospital Authority, 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 CTCs."

Persons subject to compulsory testing must keep the SMS notifications containing the result of the test and the relevant medical certificate (if

applicable) for checking by a law enforcement officer when the officer requires the persons to provide information about their undergoing the specified test.

Any enquiries on compulsory testing arrangements may be addressed to the hotline at 6275 6901, which operates daily from 9am to 6pm.

The Government will continue to trace possibly infected persons who had been to 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 the maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine at level 4 (\$25,000) and imprisonment for six months. The fixed penalty for discharging the liability is \$10,000. The person may also be issued with a compulsory testing order requiring him or her to undergo testing within a specified time frame. Any person in breach of the compulsory testing order would be liable to a fine at level 5 (\$50,000) and imprisonment for six months.

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 had contact with cases tested positive), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons."

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## **FEHD largely completes vetting of applications for fifth and sixth round of Anti-epidemic Fund with subsidies disbursed to catering sector, commercial bathhouse and places of public entertainment sectors**

To provide further relief to the sectors directly affected by the tightened social distancing measures, the Government launched the Catering Business Subsidy Scheme, the Food Courts Subsidy Scheme, the Commercial Bathhouse Licence Holder Subsidy Scheme and the Places of Public Entertainment Licence Holder Subsidy Scheme under the fifth and sixth round of the Anti-epidemic Fund (AEF), and the Dishware Washing Trade Subsidy Scheme under the sixth round of AEF. A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (May 24) that the FEHD has received about 20 920 applications and about 20 150 applications for the relevant subsidy schemes under AEF 5.0 and AEF 6.0 respectively, and

completed vetting of a total of about 41 010 applications, with a total of around \$4.976 billion in subsidies disbursed so far. The amount disbursed accounts for 99.9 per cent of the total amount of subsidies.

The spokesman said, "The remaining cases that have yet to be completed are mainly related to re-issue of licences or pending supplementary information or documentary proof to be provided by the applicants. These applicants should follow up the relevant matters or submit the required documents as soon as possible so as to complete all the procedures."

The Catering Business Subsidy Scheme under AEF 6.0 provides a one-off subsidy ranging from \$100,000 to \$500,000 to eligible licence holders of general restaurants, light refreshment restaurants, marine restaurants and factory canteens in operation according to the floor areas of the premises as specified on their licences, to provide relief for catering premises providing dine-in services. For each eligible catering outlet which is also running a karaoke establishment, nightclub and bar or pub and has closed the whole of its licensed premises as directed under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirement and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F), it is eligible to apply for an additional one-off subsidy of \$50,000 according to the respective business.

The Government also provides financial support to licensees of eligible food factory licences in food courts inside shopping malls. Each licensee of an eligible licensed food factory in operation is eligible for a one-off subsidy ranging from \$20,000 to \$100,000 according to the licensed area of its premises.

Separately, the Commercial Bathhouse Licence Holder Subsidy Scheme provides a one-off subsidy of \$100,000 to each eligible licence holder of a commercial bathhouse. The Places of Public Entertainment Licence Holder Subsidy Scheme provides a one-off subsidy of \$100,000 for each eligible holder of a places of public entertainment licence (excluding cinema operators eligible under the Cinemas Subsidy Scheme) and \$20,000 for each eligible holder of a temporary places of public entertainment licence. Under the Dishware Washing Trade Subsidy Scheme, each eligible dishware washing operator will be provided with a one-off subsidy of \$80,000 or \$150,000 according to its average monthly water consumption.

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**[DH launches Quit in June campaign and one-week nicotine replacement therapy trial in support of World No Tobacco](#)**

## Day (with photo)

In support of World No Tobacco Day, the Department of Health (DH) has launched the Quit in June campaign to promote tobacco-free life and to remind members of the public of the increased risk of developing severe illness from COVID-19 associated with smoking.

The World Health Organization has marked May 31 as World No Tobacco Day annually to highlight the health risks associated with tobacco use and advocate effective tobacco control policy to reduce tobacco consumption. The theme for this year's World No Tobacco Day is "Tobacco: Threat to our environment". Tobacco pollutes the planet and damages the health of all people. Its cultivation, production, distribution and consumption also add unnecessary pressure to our planet's scarce resources and fragile ecosystems.

Attending the kick-off ceremony of the smoke-free publicity programme for World No Tobacco Day organised by the Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health today (May 24), the Director of Health, Dr Ronald Lam, called on smokers to quit smoking in order to reduce their risk of tobacco-related diseases and death.

Dr Lam pointed out that it is beneficial for smokers of all ages to quit smoking as it brings immediate and long-term health benefits. Smokers who stay tobacco-free for four weeks would be five times more likely to quit for good.

The DH has all along subvented non-governmental organisations to provide a wide range of free smoking cessation services and support. Smokers can make use of the mail-to-quit service from these service providers to have cessation medications delivered to them by post. To further assist smokers to quit smoking, the DH has partnered with non-governmental organisations (Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Integrated Centre on Smoking Cessation and United Christian Nethersole Community Health Service) to provide a one-week trial pack of smoking cessation drugs for free. Smoking cessation drugs effectively alleviate withdrawal symptoms and can encourage quit attempts. Smokers can visit smoking cessation clinics of the above non-governmental organisations in person and will be provided with a one-week trial pack of nicotine replacement therapy for free on-site after a simple assessment. They can also make an appointment online ([www.livetobaccofree.hk/en/free-quit-tools/free-cessation-services.html](http://www.livetobaccofree.hk/en/free-quit-tools/free-cessation-services.html)) or call 1833 183 to receive the trial pack.

A course of nicotine replacement therapy generally lasts about eight to 12 weeks. If smokers decide to quit smoking after using the trial pack, they can enrol at the smoking cessation service provided at the smoking cessation clinics.

Smokers can call 1833 183 or visit the designated website [www.livetobaccofree.hk](http://www.livetobaccofree.hk) for more information on quitting and the

available supporting tools and services. They can also download the "Quit Smoking App" to keep track of their progress in quitting and get tips to deal with cravings and stay tobacco-free.



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## [Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 0.00am today (May 24), a total of 484 patients who tested positive for COVID-19 are currently hospitalised for treatment, including 35 new patients. Among the patients staying in isolation facilities, 84 patients are in isolation wards, 18 patients are in second-tier isolation wards and 39 patients are in the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre, of which 12 in total are new patients. The rest of the confirmed patients are hospitalised or readmitted due to other medical reasons. Those patients have recovered and are non-infectious, and therefore do not need to be treated in isolation facilities. Among the hospitalised patients, 10 of them are in critical condition and eight are in serious condition, of which three critical patients are receiving intensive care. There were 63 patients who have recovered, including 42 patients who have been discharged. In addition, no confirmed patient passed away in public hospitals yesterday.

In the fifth wave of the epidemic, there are 49 905 patients who have recovered so far, including 49 608 patients who have been discharged. And since early 2020, there are 62 285 patients who have recovered, including 61 988 patients who have been discharged.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

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## CHP investigates 20 confirmed and 59 asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 10 cases pending status by nucleic acid tests as well as 161 cases tested positive by rapid antigen tests

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (May 24) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, May 24, the CHP was investigating 89 additional cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus by nucleic acid tests (20 confirmed cases, 59 asymptomatic cases and 10 cases with pending case status) in the past 24 hours. Separately, 161 additional positive cases through rapid antigen tests (RATs) (76 symptomatic cases and 85 asymptomatic cases) were reported. Hong Kong has recorded a total of 761 405 and 449 431 cases that have tested positive by nucleic acid tests and RATs respectively for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The aforementioned newly reported cases consist of 34 imported cases (28 cases and six cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests and RATs respectively). The CHP is continuing with epidemiological investigations on the cases. Please refer to the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" ([www.coronavirus.gov.hk](http://www.coronavirus.gov.hk)) for more information.

Meanwhile, according to the whole genome sequencing analysis by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch, Hong Kong has recorded a total of 11 cases, 64 cases, 12 cases and three cases carrying the sub-lineages BA.2.12, BA.2.12.1, BA.4 and BA.5 under the Omicron mutant strain respectively.

In addition, as of 0.00am, May 24, a total of 9 157 death cases that had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus during the fifth wave (since December 31, 2021) were recorded (i.e. no new reported cases), with 9 079 and 75 deaths reported from the Hospital Authority and public mortuaries respectively as well as three deaths reported from the Chinese University of Hong Kong Medical Centre. Hong Kong has so far recorded a total of 9 370 death cases that have tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Furthermore, among the earlier cases by nucleic acid tests reported, there were cases (including pending cases) changed to confirmed, asymptomatic or re-positive cases. As at yesterday (May 23), the total number of confirmed cases was 332 040, while the figures for asymptomatic cases, re-positive cases and pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 198 759, 23 and 230 494 respectively.



The spokesman for the CHP stressed that as the local situation of COVID-19 infection is still severe, the CHP strongly appeals to the community to continue to comply with social distancing measures, avoid going out and refrain from participating in unnecessary or crowded activities or gatherings. This would lower the risk of infection and prevent the virus from spreading in the community.

â€‹The spokesman reminded that COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from the SARS-CoV-2 virus. They can provide effective protection to those vaccinated in preventing serious complications and even death after infection. People who have yet to receive vaccination, especially senior citizens, chronic patients and other immunocompromised persons who face a higher chance of death after COVID-19 infection, should get vaccinated as early as possible for self-protection and to reduce the risk of falling seriously ill and death should they get infected.