

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 policies to ensure blood safety. The BTS regularly reviews the blood donation arrangements for prospective donors who have returned from areas with potential risks of infectious diseases. In response to the latest developments in COVID-19, the spokesperson for the BTS today (February 29) announced the following precautionary measure to be implemented with immediate effect:

- Members of the public who have recently visited a place with active community transmission of COVID-19 should defer blood donation for 28 days from the date of departure.

Currently, areas with active community transmission include the Mainland, Korea, Iran and three regions of Italy (Lombardia, Veneto and Emilia-Romagna). The list of places with active community transmission is available on the following webpage of the Centre for Health Protection 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 defer blood donation for 28 days; and
- Members of the public with confirmed COVID-19 infection will be deferred for 180 days after complete recovery.

The above arrangements have been made following careful assessment and thorough consideration of associated risks on blood safety by the Hospital Authority (BTS) Expert Panel on Blood and Blood Products Safety. The Expert Panel will remain vigilant and work closely with relevant departments to monitor the latest developments and review related measures in a timely manner. Meanwhile, all blood donors are reminded that if they develop symptoms of fever, respiratory tract infection or pneumonia after blood donation, they should seek medical advice and inform the healthcare staff of the BTS (during office hours: 2710 1201/2710 1243/2710 1298; outside office hours: 2710 1210/2710 1234) as soon as possible.