

Colorectal Cancer Screening Programme to extend coverage to Hong Kong residents aged 50 to 75 tomorrow

The Department of Health (DH) will fully implement the Colorectal Cancer Screening Programme (CRCSP) tomorrow (January 1), further extending its coverage to Hong Kong residents aged 50 to 75, i.e. those born in the years 1944 to 1970, to enrol in screening tests subsidised by the Government for the prevention of colorectal cancer.

Regularised in August last year, the CRCSP heavily subsidises asymptomatic Hong Kong residents to undergo screening tests for colorectal cancer with no quota for participants.

Participants shall attend a medical consultation by an enrolled primary care doctor (PCD) and will receive a Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) screening arranged by the PCD. A government subsidy of \$280 per consultation applies including the second consultation by the PCD to follow up on a positive FIT test result. Under the CRCSP, about 97% of the service locations of enrolled PCDs will not require additional charges.

If the FIT result is positive, the participant will be referred to an enrolled colonoscopy specialist to receive a colonoscopy examination subsidised by the Government in order to find out the cause of bleeding. Under the standard colonoscopy service package targeted at FIT-positive participants, the subsidy amount is \$8,500 if polyp removal is necessary, whereas the amount is \$7,800 if no polyp removal is needed. Colonoscopy specialists may charge a co-payment not exceeding \$1,000 when providing the standard colonoscopy examination service. Overall, more than 70% of the locations of enrolled colonoscopy specialists will not require additional charges.

And for FIT-negative participants, they should receive FIT re-screening every two years until they pass the age of 75 so as to maximise the Programme's capability to prevent colorectal cancer. They will receive reminders via SMS, email or postal mail when they are due for re-screening. The subsidised FIT re-screening services are provided in any enrolled PCD clinic.

A spokesman for the DH said that the screenings can identify those who have colorectal cancer before they present with symptoms, or individuals at increased risk of colorectal cancer and enable them to receive early treatment, thus improving the prognosis significantly. And with colorectal adenoma removed in the course of a colonoscopy, these lesions are also prevented from turning into cancer.

The spokesman called on eligible persons to join the CRCSP as soon as

possible, and prevent colorectal cancer by leading a healthy lifestyle and having well-organised screenings.

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Eligible persons who are interested to join the CRCSP should enrol in the Electronic Health Record Sharing System (eHRSS). Please refer to the eHRSS website at www.ehealth.gov.hk or call the Registration Office at 3467 6300 for details.

For more information on the CRCSP, please visit the DH's thematic website www.colonscreen.gov.hk or call the dedicated hotline (3565 6288) during office hours.