

Extension of special visiting arrangements in public hospitals

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The Hospital Authority (HA) spokesperson announced today (May 26) that the special visiting arrangements will be extended to other acute and specialist hospitals with inpatient services, and child and adolescent psychiatric wards or units from next Tuesday (May 31) (details shown in the Appendix).

The HA spokesperson said, "The HA understands the desire of relatives to visit patients. Having considered the latest stabilised epidemic situation, the HA decided to further extend the special visiting arrangements to other public hospitals in order to address their needs."

For patients with a high physical dependence, hospitals will contact relatives to offer early appointments if situations allow. For child and adolescent psychiatric patients, the special visiting arrangements are applicable to patients below the age of 18 who have been transferred out of observation areas. With the exception of patients staying in intensive care units, infectious disease or isolation wards, other psychiatric wards and wards or cubicles admitting COVID-19 patients, one to two visits by one registered visitor will be arranged for each patient every week, with a one hour duration for each visit. Hospital staff will contact relatives in the next few days for appointments. Relatives are not required to call the hospital for booking themselves.

Visitors are required to comply with the requirement of the Vaccine Pass, including having received the required dosage of COVID-19 vaccine, or being recovered persons of COVID-19 in the Government's record, and holding the relevant vaccination record or a record of a recovered person.

In addition, visitors must provide either a nucleic acid test negative result obtained within 48 hours, or a rapid antigen test negative result obtained within 24 hours before the visit. Visitors who have recovered from COVID-19 within 90 days (starting from the 14th day after receiving confirmation of infection) will be exempted from the testing requirements if they can provide relevant proof of infection and recovery.

The special visiting arrangements are not applicable for persons having a COVID-19 Vaccination Medical Exemption Certificate with a valid exemption of Vaccine Pass. The HA spokesperson said, "Public hospitals are unable to arrange visits for unvaccinated individuals since they are at higher risk of infection. It is to protect them from being infected, as well as to protect patients and healthcare staff."

The requirements for the Vaccine Pass and COVID-19 testing also apply to

compassionate visits under specific circumstances. The compassionate visiting arrangements for critical or end-of-life patients will remain unchanged.

All visitors entering public hospitals are required to comply with the infection control measures such as wearing surgical masks, temperature checking and filling in health declaration forms. Visitors are advised to complete the health declaration form found on the HA webpage or the mobile app "HA Go" 24 hours before the visit and show the QR code generated by the system to ward staff. Moreover, visitors are also required to observe the requirements of the "LeaveHomeSafe" venue QR code when entering public hospitals.

The HA hopes the patients' family members can understand and comply with the visiting arrangements under the current epidemic situation. All hospitals will continue to facilitate compassionate and video visiting as far as practicable.