

Free COVID-19 testing service provided for targeted groups at community testing centres

The Food and Health Bureau (FHB) announced today (July 1) that the Government will continue to provide free COVID-19 testing service at community testing centres (CTCs) for persons of the following targeted groups who have yet to complete a COVID-19 vaccination course or are unfit for vaccination because of health reasons. Eligible persons may continue to make booking online (www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/) for free testing service at the CTCs; those who have no appointment will need to pay for the testing service at \$240. The relevant testing service will be available for free until end of July.

Persons eligible for booking a free test every seven days

â–€ Staff of catering businesses and scheduled premises

â–€ Staff of quarantine hotels

Persons eligible for booking a free test every 14 days

â–€ Construction site personnel (including registered construction workers and other resident site personnel) *

â–€ Staff of public and private swimming pools/beaches

â–€ Staff of specified hotels

Other persons eligible for booking a free test

â–€ Working staff accompanying and receiving local group tours (including tourist guides, tour escorts, staff seeing off the groups, drivers of chartered tour coaches and crew of chartered ferries)*

(within seven days before the tour, and no more than one free test every seven days)

* (i) Persons who are unfit to receive COVID-19 vaccination because of health reasons are required to present a relevant medical certificate; and (ii) persons who have received the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine should present relevant vaccination record (such as by downloading their electronic vaccination records or saving the printouts of their vaccination records to their mobile phones, or bringing along the printouts or copies of their vaccination records).

A spokesman for the FHB said, "The Government started to provide one-off free COVID-19 testing service to targeted groups at the CTCs through online booking last year. The response has been positive. In the light of multiple cases involving the L452R mutant strain in Hong Kong recently, and taking into account the high transmissibility of mutant strains, we consider it necessary to extend the relevant testing arrangements, such that we can take effective measures against the cases immediately to cut off transmission chains as quickly as possible. The Government will regularly review the

coverage of testing for relevant targeted groups based on the latest epidemic risk assessment."

The spokesman for the FHB reminded that construction site personnel and working staff of local group tours are required to present medical certificate or vaccination record to staff of the CTCs for free testing service, and those without the required documents will need to pay for the testing service. The Government does not preclude extending this requirement to other targeted groups later.

Currently, persons of targeted groups who have not completed vaccination are generally required to undergo regular testing within 14 or seven days before work, and the specific requirements (including testing frequency, specimen requirement, etc.) are set out in Annex. In view of the protection brought by the vaccination, the relevant staff member will no longer need to undergo regular testing upon his or her completion of vaccination.

The spokesman reiterated that the two vaccines currently recognised in Hong Kong are safe and effective, and have been received by tens of millions of people worldwide. Getting vaccinated can protect oneself and those around, and is the best way to fight the virus. Most people are fit for vaccination. Currently, all Hong Kong residents aged 12 or above are eligible for receiving free vaccination. The Government calls on the public to treasure the vaccine supply in Hong Kong and get vaccinated as soon as possible.

Apart from attending the CTCs for testing, citizens can continue to utilise other free testing channels provided by the Government, including attending mobile specimen collection stations (if service scope is applicable) for free testing. For details on testing means other than the CTCs, please refer to the following webpage: www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html.