

Government announces 2019 COVID-19 Vaccination Programme (with video)

The Government announced today (February 18) the arrangements for the territory-wide COVID-19 Vaccination Programme.

A Government spokesman said that the Government had purchased three different vaccines with a total of 22 500 000 doses, which would be sufficient for vaccinating all people in Hong Kong. As the vaccines will arrive in Hong Kong in batches, there is a need for the Government to identify priority groups for vaccination with a view to taking forward the programme in a gradual and orderly manner.

According to the recommendations of the two scientific committees under the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health and the four expert advisers appointed by the Chief Executive, and taking into account the supply situation of the vaccines, the Government decided to arrange priority vaccination for the five groups below:

1. Healthcare staff and staff involved in anti-epidemic work;
2. Persons aged 60 or above (A maximum of two carers who accompany elderly people aged 70 or above can also receive vaccination);
3. Residents and staff of residential care homes for the elderly and persons with disabilities;
4. People providing essential public services;
5. People providing cross-boundary transportation or working at control points and ports.

There will be four channels of vaccination, namely 29 Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs) in the 18 districts across the territory, over 1 200 private doctors of more than 1 500 clinics participating in the programme, 18 general out-patient clinics of the Hospital Authority (HA), as well as residential care homes for the elderly and for persons with disabilities.

Health care staff will provide vaccination services to the public at the CVCs. Among the CVCs, five of them will provide the Sinovac vaccine while 24 of them will provide the Fosun Pharma/BioNTech vaccine. The CVCs will commence operation in phases, depending on the arrival of the vaccines in Hong Kong, the quantity of vaccines and the situation of vaccination. Only one vaccine will be administered in a CVC.

The 29 CVCs will operate from 8am to 8pm daily. Members of the public can select the vaccine to be inoculated, and reserve the time and place of their first and second doses through the 24-hour online booking system on the designated website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk). If necessary, people can seek assistance for making online bookings from post offices or the estate management offices of the public housing estates they reside. After

vaccination, they will receive paper vaccination records. They can also download their electronic vaccination records via the "iAM Smart" mobile app.

The spokesman said members of the public must make prior appointments for receiving vaccinations in CVCs or in the 18 general out-patient clinics of the HA so that adequate vaccines can be reserved according to the bookings and wastage reduced.

For residents of residential care homes for the elderly and persons with disabilities as well as nursing homes, the Government will arrange outreach vaccination teams formed by doctors and nurses to provide vaccination services to them.

After launching the vaccination programme, the Government will, having regard to the actual situation, consider covering people aged between 16 and 59 with chronic diseases as well, and then other members of the public under 60.

The spokesman said that for the two vaccines procured under the advance purchase agreement, the first batch of one million doses of Sinovac will arrive in Hong Kong tomorrow, while the first batch of one million doses of the Fosun Pharma/BioNTech vaccine, manufactured in Germany, are expected to arrive by the end of this month.

The vaccination programme will open for online appointments starting from next Tuesday (February 23). The priority groups can receive the Sinovac vaccine at the five CVCs and the 18 general out-patient clinics of the HA starting from February 26. More than a thousand of private doctors participating in the programme are also expected to administer Sinovac vaccine before mid March.

The spokesman said that vaccination is a top priority of the anti-epidemic measures. Members of the public are encouraged to fight the virus by getting vaccinated early so that to enable Hong Kong to fight successfully the epidemic as soon as possible.

For information about the vaccination, please visit the designated website at www.covidvaccine.gov.hk .