

Government encourages use of community testing centres and mobile specimen collection stations for testing

The Government has been refining its anti-epidemic strategies in accordance with the development of the epidemic, including conducting large-scale COVID-19 testing for groups of different risks under the three key principles of "compulsory testing on a mandatory basis, targeted testing on an obligatory basis and testing on a voluntary basis" with a view to achieving "early identification, early isolation and early treatment", and cutting transmission chains in the community as early as possible.

A Government spokesman said, "The Government has all along been providing convenient testing services to the public through various channels, including a free testing service. We encourage the public to make good use of various means such as community testing centres and mobile specimen collection stations in various districts for testing."

The 21 community testing centres across the territory provide self-paid testing services to the public for general community or private purposes (such as certifications for travelling or work); and free testing services for persons subject to compulsory testing or targeted groups requiring testing.

At present, persons of certain targeted groups (including employees of designated scheduled premises and catering businesses, construction site personnel, school staff), residents and workers subject to compulsory testing, as well as persons with "LeaveHomeSafe" COVID-19 exposure notification may receive free testing at community testing centres. A list of such eligible persons is at the Annex.

Booking and walk-in services are available at community testing centres. The 24-hour booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk/en) shows the booking status of testing centres for the coming week, and members of the public can choose the testing centre and time slot suitable for them. The centres would accord priority to serve individuals with advance bookings. Members of the public may call the centres for enquiries on the availability of booking or walk-in quotas before visiting.

Moreover, about 20 mobile specimen collection stations are in operation to provide a free testing service to the public (see the locations and service scope at www.communitytest.gov.hk/en/station/). Some of them are dedicated to providing services to staff of catering businesses and designated scheduled premises, and local residents and workers subject to compulsory testing.

To enable the working population to undergo testing on their rest days

or before/after work, the community testing centres are open daily from 8am to 1.30pm and from 2.30pm to 8pm, even on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays. Meanwhile, mobile specimen collection stations are generally open daily from 10am to 8pm.

"The number of tests available for appointments at community testing centres has been greatly increased to over 38 000 per day, and more manpower has been deployed to serve the public. Over the past few weeks, the average appointment rate of the 21 community testing centres in the territory for the next seven days was only about 20 per cent. There are still plenty of places available to meet the testing demand."

The Government reminds the public that they can undergo COVID-19 testing through various means. For details, please refer to the following webpage: www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html. Individuals with symptoms should seek medical advice from doctors promptly and should not attend the community testing centres or mobile specimen collection stations. Other than the Accident and Emergency Departments of public hospitals and general outpatient clinics, persons with symptoms may visit private clinics and hospitals and undergo testing as instructed by medical professionals in order to receive an early and appropriate diagnosis and treatment.