

Government follows up on positive sewage testing results and urges public to undergo testing

The Government announced today (January 27) that testing arrangement would be stepped up in light of the sewage samples collected in various districts are tested positive for COVID-19 virus. Residents and workers of relevant areas are urged to undergo testing as soon as possible to help cut the silent transmission chains and achieve "early identification, early isolation and early treatment".

A Government spokesman said, "Sewage surveillance through testing sewage samples collected in different districts has been an integral part of the anti-epidemic strategy, facilitating the effective monitoring of virus spread in the community. The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and the Drainage Services Department (DSD) worked in collaboration with the cross-disciplinary team of the University of Hong Kong (HKU) and recently detected positive testing results of samples collected in a number of districts, indicating a certain viral load contained in the sewage. To enable more members of the public to undergo testing so as to identify asymptomatic patients, the Government will issue compulsory testing notice, distribute COVID-19 rapid test kits, set up mobile testing stations, etc, in relevant areas according to the level of infection risk."

Compulsory testing

In response to the positive sewage testing results in Kwai Chung, Kwun Tong, Chai Wan and Ma On Shan, the Government exercises the power under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) and publishes in the Gazette a compulsory testing notice, requiring any person who had been present at the following specified premises during the specified period to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test

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- Kwai Chung: Fu On House, Fu Ching House, Fu Ping House, Fu Yat House, Fu Nga House, Fu Sau House and Fu Pik House in Tai Wo Hau Estate
- Kwun Tong: Yung Lai House and Cheuk Lai House in Yau Lai Estate
- Chai Wan: Tsui Luk House in Tsui Lok Estate and Tsui Fuk House in Tsui Wan Estate
- Ma On Shan: Kam Fai Court at 8 Hang Kin Street; Vista Paradiso at 2 Hang Ming Street and Baycrest at 8 Hang Ming Street
- Ma On Shan: Renaissance College at 5 Hang Ming Street; Ma On Shan Methodist Primary School at 11 Hang Ming Street

The Government strongly reminds members of the public to strictly follow the compulsory testing requirements and undergo testing on time as required.

The above compulsory testing requirement applies to those who have completed a COVID-19 vaccination course as well. They are advised to closely monitor their health conditions. They should seek medical attention and undergo testing even if they have only mild symptoms.

Details of the compulsory testing notice are available on the website of the Centre for Health Protection, the Department of Health via www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/ctn_20220126.pdf.

Rapid test

As regards positive sewage testing results identified in Tsz Ching Estate, the Home Affairs Department (including Wong Tai Sin District Office) together with the Housing Department will distribute COVID-19 rapid test kits to residents of Tsz Ching Estate and three nearby public housing estates (namely Tsz Lok Estate, Tsz Man Estate and Tsz Hong Estate) from today for them to take the test on their own, in the hope of identifying infected persons early.

Residents may call the hotline at 3700 8888 for enquiries relating to the use of the rapid test kits. Should positive test results is shown on the test kit, user should seek medical attention at the Accident and Emergency Departments promptly, so that appropriate diagnosis and treatment can be given at the earliest possible time. Residents should stay home as far as possible and avoid going out apart from seeking medical consultation in order to prevent the virus from spreading in the community. The spokesman stressed that rapid test kit testing is not a substitute for the compulsory testing requirement. Individuals who are in doubt about their own health condition, who visited places with epidemic outbreaks or had contact with cases tested positive, etc, should undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test promptly.

Undergo testing on a voluntary basis

Some sewage samples collected in Lam Tsuen area of Tai Po and Tung Chung North were also tested positive, reflecting a higher risk of community transmission. The Government calls on residents and those working in the following areas who are exposed to infection risks to undergo testing on a voluntary basis –

- Area between Lam Kam Road Interchange and Tai Om Road
- Area near Man Tung Road in Tung Chung, covering Caribbean Coast, Seaview Crescent and Le Bleu Deux

Since October 2020, the Government has been collecting sewage samples across the city for sewage surveillance. The EPD, the DSD and the cross-disciplinary team of the HKU will continue to conduct sewage testing in all districts in Hong Kong to ascertain the source of the virus.