

Government provides further support to persons pending admission to hospitals or isolation facilities

The Government will provide further support to persons pending admission to hospitals or isolation facilities (hereinafter as "persons pending admission") starting from tomorrow (February 21). This enables better health protection for them during the waiting period and reduces transmission risk in the community.

Starting tomorrow, the Government will distribute electronic wristbands and anti-epidemic kits to these persons pending admission by batches, and offer them specific recommendations on health monitoring, infection control advice, arranging daily necessities and garbage disposal etc.

If home environment allows, persons pending admission should stay in their own room and keep the door closed. No one should be allowed to enter the room. When they leave the room, they should wear a well-fitted surgical mask properly. They should also avoid face-to-face contact, having meals or sharing personal items with other household members as far as feasible.

During the waiting period, persons pending admission should take personal protective measures, perform hand hygiene frequently and observe cough manners. They should put the toilet lid down before flushing, and wash hands with soap and water after toileting. As for environmental hygiene, it is recommended to keep the place well ventilated by keeping windows open as far as feasible. It is best to install an air purifier in the room. Please clean and disinfect the home environment daily with 1 in 49 diluted household bleach, leave for 15-30 minutes and then rinse with water. Metallic surface can be disinfected with 70% alcohol. Furthermore, a designated toilet should be arranged for these persons as far as feasible; if not, it is necessary to clean and disinfect the toilet after each use. Please also clean and disinfect toilet bowl with 1 in 4 diluted household bleach after defaecation. If washing basin is contaminated with sputum or saliva (e.g. after rinsing mouth or brushing teeth), clean and disinfect it with 1 in 4 diluted household bleach.

Persons pending admission need to make their own arrangements for basic daily necessities and food, such as by friends and relatives or ordering online / through telephone (contactless payment methods are recommended). Nevertheless, delivery persons should leave the items at the door (e.g. a chair outside the apartment), refrain from entering the home premises and avoid having face-to-face contact in order to reduce infection risk. The Home Affairs Department will set up a hotline 1833 019 for these persons to seek assistance if they cannot make arrangements for their daily necessities.

To cater for the medical needs of persons pending admission, the

Hospital Authority (HA) has set up a hotline 1836 115 to answer their enquiries on medical issues. If they develop mild symptoms (e.g. fever, cough, sore throat, etc.) during the waiting period, they may use the services offered by the HA's "designated clinics" to receive diagnosis and treatment. If the relevant persons develop warning symptoms (e.g. difficulty breathing or shortness of breath; loss of speech or mobility; pain or pressure in chest or abdomen; dizziness or confusion; seizures; severe muscle pain; not urinating; weakness or unsteadiness; decreased or no movement of fetus for pregnant women), please immediately call 999 and inform the operator that they are persons pending admission.

If persons pending admission are eventually admitted to hospitals or isolation facilities, they may cut and dispose of the wristband. After being treated and isolated, they will be discharged from hospitals or deemed to have completed isolation in accordance with relevant conditions. However, as the capacity of relevant facilities still cannot meet the demand at present, certain persons pending admission may not be sent to hospitals or isolation facilities in a timely manner. If persons pending admission have not been sent to hospitals or isolation facilities on Day 14 after obtaining a positive nucleic acid test result (the day following testing or collection of sample is counted as Day 1; if there is no such testing or collection record, the day on receiving positive nucleic acid test result is counted as Day 1), they may conduct a test including Rapid Antigen Test (RAT). If the result is negative, relevant persons no longer need to be isolated, they may leave home and continue with their daily activities. If the result is positive, relevant persons should continue waiting at home and undergo daily RAT until a negative result is obtained. Only by then can they leave home and continue with their daily activities. Relevant persons will be recorded as having recovered from COVID-19 on the government system.

The Government has launched a dedicated webpage setting out the details of the arrangement, as well as health advice for infected persons made by various medical professional bodies, for public reference (www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/pending-admission.html).

Apart from the above arrangement, the Government encourages corporations and organisations with a larger scale to consider rendering support to their infected staff and relevant individuals. When they report absences for having been tested positive to their employers, corporations and organisations may also promptly offer the above health advice and anti-epidemic kits (e.g. materials like thermometers, surgical masks and RAT kits) during their waiting period. This will help to provide them with basic health protection before receiving wristbands and anti-epidemic kits from the Government, thereby ensuring them to stay home safe against the epidemic.