

Government repeats appeal for elderly persons to undergo frequent COVID-19 testing

In the light of the gradual relaxation of social distancing measures and the increase in social activities, the Government today (May 4) appealed to elderly persons again to undergo frequent COVID-19 testing and to keep a close watch on their own health condition. Apart from undergoing free testing at community testing centres (CTCs) and mobile specimen collection stations, elderly persons can also collect COVID-19 rapid antigen test (RAT) kits at elderly service units.

The Government started distributing free RAT kits to elderly persons aged 60 or above through various elderly service units since April 19 so as to encourage them to undergo voluntary RAT testing from time to time. As at May 2, a total of close to 2 million RAT kits were distributed by the Government through relevant channels.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) said that elderly persons have higher COVID-19 infection risks. Making good use of RAT kits to conduct regular testing allows early identification of infection, so that appropriate treatment can be provided in a timely manner, thereby preventing development of serious illness or even death. The FHB suggested that elderly persons who have received at least two doses of COVID-19 vaccine to undergo an RAT at least once per week, and those who are not fully vaccinated should conduct an RAT at least three times per week. The Government will continue to distribute RAT kits through various elderly service units until the end of May.

"The supply of RAT kits is sufficient. There is no need for elderly persons to stockpile RAT kits. To allow more elderly persons to benefit from the distribution, a total of five sets of RAT kits will be provided each time. Recipients should not collect them on behalf of other persons, nor collect the RAT kits repeatedly on the same day," the spokesman added.

The following service units will continue to provide free RAT kits to all elderly persons aged 60 or above (including members and non-members). Elderly persons should collect the RAT kits in person and bring along any documents for proof of age, such as identification documents, Senior Citizen Card or JoyYou Card for verification purposes. The units are:

- [Two District Health Centres \(DHC\) and 11 DHC Expresses](#) under the Primary Healthcare Office of the FHB;
- 213 [District Elderly Community Centres/Neighbourhood Elderly Centres/Social Centres for the Elderly](#) subsidised by the Social Welfare Department (SWD);

- 14 [Elderly Health Centres](#) under the Department of Health; and
- 18 district-based [Chinese Medicine Clinics cum Training and Research Centres](#) (visiting patients as primary target recipients) operating on a tripartite collaboration model involving the Hospital Authority, non-government organisations and a local university.

The above service units still have their regular services to offer to members of the public other than distributing RAT kits. To reduce the risk of infection, the spokesman reminded that elderly persons should avoid collecting RAT kits from service units during peak hours if not attending a medical consultation.

The Day Care Centres/Units for the Elderly, Integrated Home Care Services Teams, Enhanced Home and Community Care Services Teams and Recognised Service Providers of the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly subsidised by the SWD will continue to provide free RAT kits to their members and service users aged 60 or above.

The Government is also providing free COVID-19 nucleic acid testing services to all elderly people aged 60 or above at CTCs and mobile specimen collection stations. No advance booking is needed for the elderly. For locations of the CTCs and mobile specimen collection stations, please browse www.communitytest.gov.hk.