

Government sets up temporary testing centres in Kowloon City and Yau Tsim Mong

The Government has been setting up temporary testing centres in four districts, namely Wan Chai, Kwai Tsing, Kowloon City and Yau Tsim Mong in phases starting from yesterday (October 10) to take specimens from members of the public for free. In particular, the Kowloon City Temporary Testing Centre located at Kai Tak Community Hall and the Yau Tsim Mong Temporary Testing Centre located at Henry G. Leong Yaumatei Community Centre will commence operation from 8am tomorrow (October 12).

A Government spokesman said, "In view of the worsening epidemic situation in Hong Kong, the Government decided to set up testing centres in locations related to recent community outbreak clusters, which are Wan Chai, Kwai Tsing, Kowloon City and Yau Tsim Mong Districts, to facilitate proactive testing of the public, in order to identify cases and asymptomatic patients as early as possible so as to cut the transmission chains in the community. The temporary district-based testing is free of charge. No prior appointment is required. Members of the public who consider themselves as having a higher risk of exposure to the virus may visit any of the testing centres during its opening hours for taking combined nasal and throat swab specimens. The contractors of the testing service will collect specimens from the temporary testing centres and deliver them to laboratories for testing."

Upon arrival at the temporary testing centres, members of the public will be asked to show his/her Hong Kong Identity (HKID) Card, Hong Kong Birth Certificate or any other valid identity document, and to provide a local mobile phone number that can receive SMS for registration. After the registration, trained medical or healthcare personnel will collect combined nasal and throat swab specimens of members of the public. People whose test results are negative will be informed by SMS through their registered mobile phone number in around two to three days. If a test result is positive, the case will be referred to the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health (DH) for immediate follow-up action.

"Except for children under six years old and people not suitable for the test, all holders of valid HKID cards, birth certificates or any other valid identity document who are asymptomatic can visit the nearest temporary test centre for specimen collection."

Kowloon City Temporary Testing Centre and Yau Tsim Mong Temporary Testing Centre will commence operation from tomorrow and will be opened until October 14 tentatively. The two centres will be open from 8am to 1.30pm and 2.30pm to 8pm every day. The specimen collection and testing services for both centres are provided by Hong Kong Molecular Pathology Diagnostic Centre. The expected daily testing capacity is 1 000 specimens for each centre.

Wan Chai Temporary Testing Centre and Kwai Tsing Temporary Testing Centre which have commenced operation yesterday and today respectively will continue to provide service until October 14 tentatively. The two centres will also be open from 8am to 1.30pm and 2.30pm to 8pm every day.

The Government will decide whether it is necessary to extend the operation period of the temporary testing centres after reviewing the usage of the temporary testing centres and public's demand for the testing service.

To ensure the health and safety of the public participating in testing and personnel manning the temporary testing centres, these venues selected for use as temporary testing centres have been assessed and considered suitable by the DH and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department. Various infection control measures will also be put in place at the centres in accordance with the recommendations of the DH. There will also be an adequate supply of protective equipment for personnel manning the testing centres.

In addition to setting up temporary testing centres, in order to assist members of the public who feel they have a higher risk of exposure and are experiencing mild discomfort to undergo a COVID-19 test, the Hospital Authority (HA) has increased the total number of general outpatient clinics for distribution of the deep throat saliva specimen collection packs to 46 starting from September 28. The specimen collection packs distribution time at the 46 HA general outpatient clinics has been extended to 9am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm from Monday to Friday starting from October 9. Members of the public can obtain the specimen collection packs for free near the entrance of the general outpatient clinics during the aforesaid period.

Testing is an integral part of the epidemic control strategy. It helps to achieve the objective of early identification, early isolation and early treatment and to cut silent transmission chain so as to curb the spread of disease in the community. The spokesman appealed to all members of the public who have doubts about their health condition to actively take part in the above testing schemes to protect oneself and others and to fight the virus together.