

Monkeypox Vaccination Programme to commence in October

The Department of Health (DH) today (September 21) announced that the Monkeypox Vaccination Programme for high-risk groups will commence on October 5 and booking will open from October 3.

Following an imported case of monkeypox recorded earlier in September, the Government has activated the Alert level of the Preparedness and Response Plan for Monkeypox (the Plan), reflecting a low immediate health impact caused by monkeypox on the local population.

While the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases (JSC) under the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the DH do not recommend a mass monkeypox vaccination programme, the JSC updated its [consensus interim recommendations](#) on September 15 and recommended, among others, the use of third-generation vaccine for post-exposure prophylaxis for contacts of confirmed cases as well as pre-exposure vaccination for individuals at high risk of exposure.

Under the programme, the following high-risk target groups can receive monkeypox vaccination on a voluntary basis:

1. Individuals with high risk sexual practices, e.g. multiple sexual partners, sex workers, history of sexually transmitted infection within the past 12 months;
2. Healthcare workers responsible for caring of patients with confirmed monkeypox;
3. Laboratory personnel working with zoonotic pox viruses; and
4. Animal care personnel with high risk of exposure in case of monkeypox occurrence in animals in Hong Kong.

Starting from October 5, opportunistic vaccination will be provided to clients with high risk sexual practices at the DH's six Social Hygiene Service Clinics (SoCHS) (namely Wan Chai Male SoCHS, Wan Chai Female SoCHS, Yau Ma Tei Male SoCHS, Yung Fung Shee SoCHS, Fanling SoCHS and Tuen Mun SoCHS). Relevant clients can obtain further information from the respective clinics. For details of the clinics, please refer to the following websites: www.dh.gov.hk/english/tele/tele_chc/tele_chc_shcf.html and www.dh.gov.hk/english/tele/tele_chc/tele_chc_shcm.html. Such service would also be provided to clients at the DH's Integrated Treatment Centre in Kowloon Bay and the Hospital Authority's (HA) Special Medical Clinics at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Princess Margaret Hospital.

With regard to healthcare workers and laboratory personnel, the HA and the DH will provide vaccination for its respective staff at high risk of exposure earlier, starting from September 26 at HA staff clinics and selected DH clinics respectively.

For other high-risk target groups (including those who are not clients of the DH's SocHS), the DH has also set up two designated centres which are situated at 3/F, Yau Ma Tei Jockey Club Polyclinic, 145 Battery Street, Yau Ma Tei (operates from Monday to Sunday, 9am to 8pm), and 7/F, Tang Chi Ngong Specialist Clinic, 284 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai (evening from 5.30pm to 8pm from Monday to Friday except public holidays). Individuals under the high-risk target group(s) can make a booking by email (mpv_booking@dh.gov.hk) or by phone (2547 1900) from October 3 to receive monkeypox vaccination starting from October 5.

The Government has procured a third-generation vaccine by making reference to the earlier JSC recommendations. The first shipment of the third-generation vaccine (JYNNEOS) has arrived in Hong Kong and will be distributed for use in the Monkeypox Vaccination Programme. According to the recommendation by the JSC, a two-dose regime is required while those who have received smallpox vaccine will only need one dose. Based on the suggested administration method by the JSC and the current vaccine procurement, it is expected about 120 000 individuals can receive vaccination under the programme. The CHP appeals to members of the public who are under the high-risk target groups to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

Apart from launching the vaccination programme, the Government is well prepared to tackle monkeypox, including the reservation of the Sai Kung Outdoor Recreation Centre for the quarantine of close contacts of confirmed monkeypox cases, as well as other precautionary measures under the Plan. Members of the public, especially those subject to high risks of exposure, should take precautions and avoid close physical contact with persons or animals suspected of monkeypox infection.