

More clinics to distribute specimen collection packs for convenience of public with mild discomfort

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

To tie in with the Government's epidemic control strategy, the Hospital Authority (HA) today (September 16) announced that it will continue to assist the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health in distributing specimen collection packs and collecting deep throat saliva specimens at general outpatient clinics (GOPCs) during specific periods, thereby assisting individuals who feel they have a higher risk of exposure and are experiencing mild discomfort to undergo a COVID-19 test.

The HA spokesperson said that the points for distributing the specimen collection packs will be increased in phases. "Starting from this Friday (September 18), the total number of GOPCs distributing specimen collection packs will be increased from 22 to 31 (see attachment). The HA will further increase the number of clinics for distributing specimen collection packs, subject to smooth operations," the spokesperson said.

"Since July 27, HA GOPCs have distributed about 50,000 specimen collection packs. Among over 32,000 specimens tested by the laboratory, 64 were positive for COVID-19.

"The specimens collected by this programme are handled by an accredited local laboratory. For specimens that test positive for COVID-19, the cases will be reported to the CHP for confirmation in accordance with the prevailing mechanism. The participants concerned will be notified by the CHP for admission to public hospitals for isolation as soon as possible. Participants should assume a test result is negative if they do not receive notification within three working days of submitting the specimen."

Staff of the 31 GOPCs will distribute the specimen collection packs (with contents including a specimen collection bottle, packaging plastic bags and guidelines for collection of deep throat saliva samples) between 7.30am and 8.30am from Monday to Friday (except public holidays) at the designated areas outside the clinics. Only one pack will be distributed to each person while stocks last.

The HA spokesperson reminded participants that they are required to submit the deep throat saliva specimens within three working days, together with the necessary information, for laboratory tests. The collection points outside the 31 clinics will be open between 10am and 11am from Monday to Saturday (except public holidays).

The HA spokesman also reminded the public to wear their own masks and

maintain social distance while collecting packs or submitting the specimens.