

# Scientific Committees under CHP update consensus interim recommendation on quarantine requirements for vaccinated inbound travellers

The Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases under the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (JSC) convened a meeting today (August 16), joined by the Chief Executive's expert advisory panel (EAP), to discuss the consensus interim recommendation on the quarantine requirements for vaccinated inbound travellers based on the prevailing scientific understanding on COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines. The updated recommendation supersedes the previous one issued on June 9, 2021.

During the meeting, the JSC-EAP reviewed the latest situation of COVID-19. Growing evidence supports the increased transmissibility of the Delta variant, which has been showing very rapid spread globally. It is noted that infection with Delta variant results in similarly high SARS-CoV-2 viral loads in vaccinated and unvaccinated persons, and that fully vaccinated persons with the Delta variant breakthrough infections can spread the virus to others. The JSC-EAP noted that the risks associated with cases imported from overseas to the local community pose increasing threats to the Government's efforts in the control of the local situation. Introduction of SARS-CoV-2 by import-related cases could trigger increased community transmission of COVID-19, particularly in view of the increasing spread of variants of concern.

According to the latest local statistics, almost 12 per cent of the imported cases involving fully vaccinated persons were reported beyond the seventh day after arrival, including one case reported on the thirteenth day after arrival who was detected in the community.

The JSC-EAP agreed that the duration of compulsory quarantine for inbound travellers could be shortened from 21 days to 14 days of quarantine at a designated place plus 7 days of self-monitoring with multiple polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing, provided that the following three criteria have been satisfied:

(a) Documented proof of completion of the full course of recognised COVID-19 vaccines, and 14 days have passed from the date of completing the full course of vaccination; and

(b) Result of PCR of the respiratory specimen taken on arrival is negative; and

(c) Positive IgG/total antibody against SARS-CoV-2 spike protein/surrogate neutralising antibody, conducted in Hong Kong after arrival.

The purpose of checking antibody is to show evidence of response to

vaccination. If the serology test result is negative, the shortening of quarantine period could not be considered. The serology test should be done in Hong Kong on arrival and is valid for the coming three months.

For travellers who have recovered from previous COVID-19 infection, they would be required to receive one dose of COVID-19 vaccine in order to be considered as fully vaccinated.

â€‹The updated recommendation is available at the CHP's website [www.chp.gov.hk/en/static/24008.html](http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/static/24008.html).