

Scientific Committees under CHP update criteria for releasing confirmed COVID-19 patients from isolation

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, joined by the Chief Executive's expert advisory panel, today (August 6) published an updated consensus recommendation on the criteria for releasing confirmed COVID-19 patients from isolation based on the prevailing scientific understanding on COVID-19. The updated recommendation supersedes the previous one dated July 29, 2020.

The updated criteria for releasing a confirmed COVID-19 patient from isolation are as follows:

For symptomatic patients:

1. Clinical conditions improve and afebrile; and
2. Either one of the following laboratory criteria:
 - With two clinical specimens of the same type (i.e. respiratory or stool) tested negative for nucleic acid of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) by reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) taken at least 24 hours apart (for patients ever with stool specimen(s) tested positive, they should have two negative stool specimens collected 24 hours apart before release from isolation); or three clinical specimens of the same type taken at least 24 hours apart in which RT-PCR test results showed consistent Ct value 33 or above; and 10 days have passed since the onset of illness; or
 - With transition of the test results of SARS-CoV-2 IgG from negative to positive results with at least one PCR Ct value 33 or above.

For patients who did not develop any COVID-19 compatible symptoms all along:

Either one of the following laboratory criteria:

- With two clinical specimens of the same type (i.e. respiratory or stool) tested negative for nucleic acid of SARS-CoV-2 by RT-PCR taken at least 24 hours apart (for patients ever with stool specimen(s) tested positive, they should have two negative stool specimens collected 24 hours apart before release from isolation); or three clinical specimens of the same type taken at least 24 hours apart in which RT-PCR test results showed consistent Ct value 33 or above; and 10 days after the

first positive RT-PCR test for SARS-CoV-2; or

- With the serology test result for SARS-CoV-2 IgG changed from negative to positive with at least one PCR Ct value 33 or above.

â€‹Details of the recommendation are available at the CHP's website www.chp.gov.hk/en/static/24008.html.