

Temporary test centres speed up tests for people upon arrival

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Based on the experience of the past few days, the Hospital Authority (HA) expects the referral to public hospitals by the Port Health Division of the Department of Health of a large number of people suspected to be infected with COVID-19 to arrive at Hong Kong via the Hong Kong International Airport every day. The HA is working on the establishment of test centres at the AsiaWorld-Expo and the North Lantau Hospital under the instruction of the Government's Steering Committee in relation to the COVID-19 virus.

Starting tomorrow (March 20), people arriving Hong Kong with upper respiratory symptoms will be sent to the test centres at the AsiaWorld-Expo or the North Lantau Hospital for the viral test and to wait for the laboratory results.

The HA spokesperson said, "HA will deploy healthcare staff to the temporary test centres to collect and arrange the specimens to the hospital laboratories for testing in batches."

"People awaiting the test results will need to stay at the temporary test centre. It is estimated that it will take about half a day to a day to arrange the delivery and tests of specimens in batches."

Both test centres have designated waiting areas and individual waiting places, and will provide Internet access and charging facilities. The waiting area facilities and arrangements are in compliance with infection control standards.

Healthcare staff will arrange the transfer of patients with positive test results to public hospitals for isolation and treatment. As for those who have negative test results, they can return to their residence and continue their home quarantine for 14 days.

The spokesman added, "generally speaking, older people or those who may have other medical needs will be sent to the test centre at North Lantau Hospital. People arriving Hong Kong may also be sent directly to other public hospitals for their clinical condition."