

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (68) in DH CDB/9/12/6/4 Pt.1

12 October 2020

Dear Doctors,

**Appeal to collect specimens for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)
testing for symptomatic patients and updated local situation**

We write to solicit your support to offer COVID-19 testing for all patients with acute symptoms in order to identify infected persons in the community as early as possible amid the COVID-19 epidemic.

While the daily number of COVID-19 cases has shown a decrease in August and September from the peak level (of over 100 cases per day) in late July, local cases of unknown sources/ links were still being reported from time to time, and with further cases being identified through contact tracing. Since early October, the number of new cases started to show an increase again, particularly locally-acquired infection. In the recent week (6 to 12 October), up to 67% of the reported cases were locally-acquired infection compared to 20% in the previous week (29 September to 5 October). Of the locally-acquired cases in the past 2 weeks, up to 25% were of unknown links/sources.

New cases and outbreaks continue to be reported. The marked increase in local cases with unknown sources/ links indicate that active community transmission is ongoing, with people infected with COVID-19 in the community who have not been identified. The affected persons might only have mild or vague symptoms and go unrevealed with the possibility of onward transmitting the infection. In view of the above, there is discernible risk of large outbreaks in the community, with rapid increase in cases.

Once again, we strongly urge doctors to remain vigilant and **arrange COVID-19 test for all patients presenting with any acute symptoms, irrespective of their travel history and clinical severity.** The spectrum of clinical manifestations of COVID-19 is wide. Some infected persons may present with mild or non-specific symptoms only, especially during the early



stage of disease. Testing of COVID-19 at an earlier stage may enable earlier case detection, isolation and treatment, and hence reduce community spread.

Specimen bottles will be provided to doctors upon request. Under the enhanced arrangements, you may choose to obtain specimen bottles by collecting them from one of the designated DH clinics or postal delivery. The request form is available from: https://www.coronavirus.gov.hk/pdf/specimen_bottles_request_form.pdf

When ordering the test, please fill in the laboratory form (https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/test_request_form_public_health_laboratory_centre_dh2546.pdf) and give it to the patient together with a specimen bottle and two plastic bags for them to save a **deep throat saliva (DTS) specimen (preferably early morning specimen but non-early morning specimen is also acceptable)**. Also, you may consider to collect stool specimen for paediatric patients if collection of DTS is not possible, using the same collection bottles as for DTS.

The patients can send the specimen together with a completed laboratory form to one of the 13 collection clinics of DH or 22 general out-patients clinics of the Hospital Authority by themselves or their friends/family members/relatives **on the same day of specimen collection**. Please refer to the following webpage for the list of collection clinics (Chinese - https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/list_of_collection_points_tc.pdf; English - https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/list_of_collection_points_en.pdf). The patients and the institutions can also use the door-to-door specimen collection service provided by GOGO VAN, Pickup or Toby at their own cost. They can refer to the information below for service subscriptions and enquiries:

	GOGO VAN	Pickupp	Toby
Service subscription	www.gogovan.com.hk/covid-19-testing-en/	pupp.co/chp	www.hellotoby.com/en/ds/door-to-door-saliva-specimen-pick-up-service
General enquiries	5681 4989 (hotline)	hk@pickupp.io	3703 3250 (hotline)
Collection hours	9am to 3pm, Monday to Friday	9am to 3pm, Monday to Friday 8.30am to 10.30am on Saturdays	8.30am to 3pm, Monday to Friday 8.30am to 10.30am, Saturdays and Sundays

The laboratory report when available will be sent to the requesting doctor by fax. For cases tested positive for COVID-19, the CHP will contact the doctors and the patients for investigation. In general, staff in the clinic would not be considered as close contact if both the patients and staff wear surgical masks, the duration of consultation is short (less than 15 minutes) and there is no aerosol generating procedure performed in the clinic. It is important to adhere to infection control measures all the times. You may wish to refer to the guidelines published by the CHP for details (<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/resources/346/index.html>).

The CHP has produced infographics for publicity of COVID-19 testing for patients. You may refer to the following hyperlink for the infographics:

- Chinese -
https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/early_testing_and_detection_tc.pdf
- English -
https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/early_testing_and_detection_en.pdf

Thank you again for your unfailing support and concerted efforts in the prevention and control of communicable diseases.

Yours faithfully,



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