

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (49) in DH CDB/9/12/6/4 Pt.1

6 April 2020

Dear Medical Superintendent,

**Appeal to Private Medical Practitioners to collect specimens for
COVID-19 testing under enhanced surveillance**

I write to provide an update on the latest situation of COVID-19 and solicit your support to collect specimens from as many patients as possible to enhance local surveillance for COVID-19 in out-patient settings.

Globally, at least 1.18 million cases of COVID-19 including about 64000 deaths have been reported (as of 5 April). A total of 211 countries /areas/territories have been affected and local transmission is occurring in many countries. Out of the 1.18 million cases, over 880000 were reported in the past two weeks. The daily number of new cases has been on an increasing trend in the past few weeks with over 82000 new cases recorded on 5 April. The countries with the highest number of cases include the United States (304826 cases), Spain (130759 cases) and Italy (128948 cases).

Locally, there has been a sharp increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in Hong Kong in the past two weeks with 17 - 65 cases reported per day, as compared to less than 10 cases before mid-March. As at 4pm on 6 April, 915 cases have been reported. The recent upsurge is mainly due to marked increase in imported cases especially returnees from the United Kingdom. However, there was also an increase in locally-acquired infections since late March with local clusters in recreational premises including bars/pubs and karaoke.



The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) has started to provide free testing for COVID-19 for private medical practitioners (PMPs) through private microbiology laboratories since 9 March 2020. As of 6 April, 78 cases have been diagnosed by this enhanced

surveillance among PMPs. In order to ensure early identification of confirmed cases for the better protection of public health, we urge you to collect specimens from as many patients as possible for testing of COVID-19. This would help to identify infected patients early so that they could be isolated for treatment to minimize community spread. As a significant proportion of COVID-19 patients presented with vague or mild symptoms, specimens could be collected from patients with any acute symptom irrespective of the severity and types of symptoms or travel history.

Please advise your patients to save an early morning deep throat saliva or sputum into a leak-proof, screw-cap sputum bottle. A specimen bottle and two specimen bags should be provided to the patients. The specimen bottles and bags can be obtained from a private laboratory providing existing microbiology testing. Please refer to the following website for a list of private laboratories: <http://www.hkaml.org/index.php/members/ordinary-member>. The guideline on the procedures for collection of deep throat saliva specimens for patients is attached in **Annex**. They may also access the video at <http://videocwp.ha.org.hk/wmv/deep%20throat%20saliva%20v2.mp4> or by scanning the QR code.

Please use the request form of CHP's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) (available from: https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/test_request_form_public_health_laboratory_centre_dh2546.pdf). It is important to write down the following information on the laboratory form:

- Patient's particulars (including name, age, sex, etc.)
- Clinical details including fever, symptoms, travel and contact history, and occupation
- Requesting doctor's mobile telephone number (*for informing any positive result*)
- Patient's mobile telephone number (*for immediate contact with patients tested positive*)
- Fax number of the private laboratory for receiving report on the result

Points to note for delivery of specimens

The specimen together with the form could be sent to a private microbiology laboratory for transport to PHLSB on the day of collection following existing arrangement. Alternatively, patients can send the specimens to a collection point in one of the clinics of DH directly by themselves or their friends/family members/relatives for further delivery to

the PHLSB. Please give a completed laboratory form to the patients. The specimen should be put into a plastic bag. Then, the bagged specimen together with the form should be put into a second plastic bag. They should return the specimen together with the laboratory request form **on the same day of specimen collection** to one of DH's collection points **before 1 pm** from Monday to Friday. Please refer to the CHP website for the latest list of collection points (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).

Reports will normally be available on the next working day upon receipt of specimens by PHLSB and will be sent out by fax to the requesting private laboratories. The requesting doctor would be informed of cases with positive results. Please contact PHLSB (Tel: 2319 8360) if you have any enquiry.

The CHP will inform patients tested positive immediately to arrange admission to a public hospital. All patients tested positive will be arranged by the CHP to be admitted to a public hospital for isolation and further management. The CHP will inform the patient directly for the arrangement.

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

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'SK CHUANG', written in a cursive style.

(Dr. SK CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health

收集深喉唾液樣本病人須知

採集樣本時間：於起床後，刷牙漱口、飲食前



掃描二維碼觀看教學影片

程序：



1. 預備以下急症室/門診所提供的物品：一個樣本瓶、兩個樣本袋、紙巾



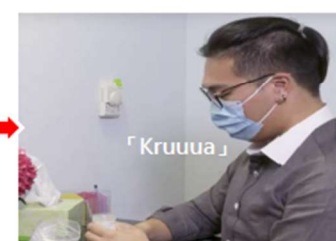
2. 以肥皂及清水洗手或以酒精搓手液潔手



3. 檢查樣本瓶上的個人資料是否正確



4. 打開樣本袋及樣本瓶蓋



5. 於喉嚨發出「Kruuua」的聲音以清出來自咽喉的唾液



6. 除下外科口罩，將唾液吐入樣本瓶內，避免唾液沾到樣本瓶外面。
(如量太少，重覆以上步驟)



7. 戴上外科口罩



8. 蓋好及扭緊樣本瓶蓋，確保沒有滲漏



9. 用紙巾抹乾淨樣本瓶表面



10. 將樣本瓶放入樣本袋內，確保瓶身直立沒有滲漏，並以肥皂及清水洗手或以酒精搓手液潔手

Patient Information Sheet on Deep Throat Saliva Collection



Scan QR code for the demonstration video

Time of specimen collection: After getting up and before brushing teeth, eating or drinking

Steps:



1. Prepare the items, including one specimen bottle and two specimen bags provided by AED / GOPC, and tissue



2. Perform hand hygiene with soap and water / alcohol-based hand rub



3. Check whether the personal details printed on the specimen bottle are correct



4. Open the specimen bottle and specimen bags



5. Make the noise of "Kruuuu" from the throat to clear saliva from deep throat



6. Take off the surgical mask and spit saliva into the bottle
(repeat the previous step if the saliva volume is too little)



7. Put on surgical mask



8. Close the lid of specimen bottle tightly to **ensure no leakage of saliva**



9. Clean the bottle surface with tissue



10. Put the bottle into specimen bag and then the 2nd bag. Keep the bottle upright all the time. Clean hands afterwards.