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HCMC Covid-19 outbreak remains 'unpredictable': health official

By **Le Phuong** July 3, 2021 | 06:53 am GMT+7



Medical workers take samples of local people in HCMC's Binh Tan District during a mass testing campaign on June 22, 2021. Photo by VnExpress/Huu Khoa.

The ongoing outbreak in HCMC is developing unpredictably and could grow bigger and spread to neighboring localities, says deputy Health Minister Nguyen Truong Son.

At a meeting with city officials Friday, Son urged that they speed up the process of mass testing to track down infections among the community to locate infected areas as soon as possible. For this, medical personnel should make effective use of the rapid test method, he said.

"The evolution of the epidemic is still unpredictable. In addition to the pool testing method (in which 10-15 different samples are pooled into one for testing and in case the pool tests positive, each one is tested separately later), the city's health sector should reinforce its medical force for making the testing campaign as effective as possible," Son said.

So far, the city has used just 128,000 rapid test kits out of a total of 222,000.

Son advised the city to carry out the mass test program in different shifts to avoid gathering of big crowds that heighten infection risks. He suggested that, if possible, the tests should be done inside each residential area instead of having a lot of residents gather at the same time at some venue.

HCMC chairman Nguyen Thanh Phong said the Covid-19 wave Vietnam is experiencing is "more dangerous, complicated and unpredictable than previous ones."

Between June 19 and 30, every day the city has recorded 65 cases with unknown sources of transmission and around 35 of these were detected only after people visited hospitals seeking treatment for other health problems.

The spread of the disease has proved how complicated the pandemic has become, especially considering the World Health Organization warning that the Delta variant is much more transmissible and has the ability to reduce the effect of Covid-19 vaccines developed to date, said Phong.



"The rate of secondary infection and the spreading speed of this variant is strong, therefore the number of infections is likely to keep rising in the coming days," Phong said.

So far, in the ongoing wave that broke out over two months ago, HCMC has registered nearly 5,000 cases and is currently the second-worst hit among all 52 infected cities and provinces, following the northern province of Bac Giang.

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Vietnam needs vaccination more than testing.

Johnnyman - 07:40 3/7/2021

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What does testing really do other than locking up people?

Peter Samson - 07:53 3/7/2021

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Vietnam broke past the defense on their own 1 yard line, ran the length of the field before fumbling the ball on the opposition 1 yard line.

The toothpaste is now well and truly out of the tube now. Learn to live with it and unlock us all. It isn't going away anywhere so focus on keeping the at risk at home (elderly, immunocompromised etc) and let the rest of us get back to work whilst the government procures and administers vaccines at a fast rate.

Rick Doss - 13:44 3/7/2021

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Not surprised at all. Testing in crowds will result in new cases. More testing will result in new cases.

Rada Cada - 07:06 3/7/2021

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The Delta variant is less dangerous though a bit more transmittable. When a virus mutates, it becomes less deadly; it wants to survive, not kill the host! Stop the lockdowns, the vulnerable can take precautions. The lockdowns will lead to more problems than solutions, such as mental, health and economic.

Dan Lindsey - 15:24 3/7/2021

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