

No need to make boosters mandatory: MMA

By **Nor Ain Mohamed Radhi** - December 19, 2023 @ 1:06pm



Samuel Surej, 53, voluntarily received the Covid-19 vaccine injection at the PPV KK Jalan Perak. -NSTP/ZUHAINY ZULKIFFLI

KUALA LUMPUR: There is no need to make boosters mandatory as data on current cases of Covid-19 show that most cases are mild, said the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA).

Its president Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz said healthy individuals can recover with rest and medication; however, it is important that those in the high-risk group take the booster shots to protect against severe Covid-19.

"Taking the recommended booster shots according to schedule is encouraged as the effect of vaccines wanes over time," she said when contacted.

Dr Azizan was responding to a question on whether booster jabs should be made mandatory, especially for vulnerable groups, instead of waiting for the number of Covid-19 cases to shoot up.

On Dec 14, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said a booster shot of a Covid-19 vaccine is recommended for vulnerable groups.

Dr Dzulkefly said vulnerable groups with comorbidities such as non-communicable diseases (NCD) are encouraged to take boosters.

Meanwhile, Dr Azizan added that smokers should consider quitting if they are worried about Covid-19.

"It should be noted that smoking makes a person more vulnerable to Covid-19, as smoking damages the lungs and affects other organs in the body.

"This puts smokers at greater risk of severe Covid-19."

She said the public is advised to take steps to strengthen their immune system by observing a balanced diet, getting sufficient quality rest daily and exercising regularly.

"Getting enough Vitamin D naturally through exposure to sunlight is also important to boost the immune system.

"Not giving enough attention to these basics can affect the immune system which is the body's natural defence against viruses and bacteria," she said.

Meanwhile, Dr Azizan said the Health Ministry has provided a comprehensive strategy to manage Covid-19.

"Over the past two weeks, there was much worry and anxiety among the public concerning the surge in cases of Covid-19.

"The ministry providing direction on managing the surge was what Malaysians needed to hear."

She said the directive given during the Health Ministry's press conference yesterday (Monday, Dec 18) would serve as a "refresher" on the 3S, 3W and TRIIS (rest, report, isolate, inform, seek), which are effective preventive practices we learned during the pandemic.

"We wish to remind the public that for the strategy to work, each and everyone has to do their part.

"Going forward, we also urge the ministry to communicate its strategy over multiple platforms to ensure the public is well informed."

Yesterday, during the press conference Dr Dzulkefly outlined five key strategies under its Covid-19 management plan to tackle the rising number of cases in the country.

The first involved early detection of Covid-19 and the SARS Cov-2 variants, followed by community empowerment via TRIIS; constant monitoring of health facilities and case management, especially to protect the high-risk segment; community empowerment via effective risk communication and last through the digitalisation of the healthcare system in managing the pandemic via the MySejahtera application.