

# It is the right and timely move, say health experts

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PETALING JAYA: The medical fraternity has hailed the controlled easing of Covid-19 restrictions, calling it the right move and a timely one.

“It’s about time we made these changes as we prepare to take the next step to endemicity,” said Association of Private Hospitals Malaysia president Datuk Dr Kuljit Singh, who was also happy that the face mask mandate had not been completely scrapped.

Masks still need to be worn within shopping complexes, offices and during e-hailing rides, among others.

“We were afraid there would be total scrapping of the face mask requirement because there is no longer the need for social distancing.

“This balanced approach is correct as some precautions are still needed,” he said.

He added that mandating face masks in crowded outdoor areas such as night markets was also a good move.

On the abolition of the PCR and RTK tests for fully vaccinated travellers entering the country, Dr Kuljit agreed that such tests have become irrelevant.

“It doesn’t make sense to require the tests as there is already a quarantine process for infected travellers. Besides, the population of most countries are already fully vaccinated,” he added.

Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Koh Kar Chai said the relaxation of rules meant taking a step closer to achieving endemicity.

“The relaxed SOPs are practical. More normalcy will help revive the economy and relieve the mental stress that has been with us since the start of the pandemic,” he said.

Dr Koh also advised the public to make the right judgment on when to wear face masks.

“We must remember that there are many children who have yet to be vaccinated while those with comorbidities can still be at risk of severe Covid-19 infections,” he said.

Medical Practitioners Coalition Association of Malaysia president Dr Raj Kumar Maharajah also agreed that the easing of restrictions was timely.

“We have a high vaccination rate and although more relaxations are granted, the public should continue to be wary,” he said.

He advised those travelling back to their kampung for Hari Raya to remain vigilant and do self-tests, besides wearing face masks in crowded areas.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia’s Prof Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh agreed that the public should stay vigilant.

“Although face masks are no longer mandated outdoors, people should always carry a spare just in case they need to enter indoor premises or crowded areas. You never know who may be a carrier.”