

No need for daily Covid-19 self-tests, says MMA

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There is no reason for people to test themselves daily unless the nature of their work requires it, says Dr Koh Kar Chai.

PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) has urged the public to conduct Covid-19 self-tests only when needed.

MMA president Dr Koh Kar Chai said a shortage of RTK-Antigen (RTK-Ag) self-test kits will only occur when there is panic buying.

“There is an ample supply of self-test kits in the market. The public is advised not to hoard the test kits and only buy the amount that is needed,” he said in a statement today.

He added that there was no reason for people to test themselves daily unless the nature of their work required it.



Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Koh Kar Chai.

“Even healthcare professionals do not test themselves daily unless they are required to do so in certain high-risk situations,” Koh said.

“Circumstances needing self-testing will only be required when attending functions involving groups of people, visiting elderly or immuno-compromised individuals, after coming into close contact with infected individuals or when exhibiting symptoms, to name a few.”

Koh also pointed out that the number of positive cases will be high because of the high transmissibility of the Omicron variant.

“It will be prudent to maintain the prescribed SOPs at all times to ensure that we don’t add on to the numbers,” he said.

Responding to claims that the self-test kits' results were often inaccurate, Koh said they were still useful in detecting symptomatic cases.

"Although the accuracy of the self-test kits may not be comparable (due to the sampling methods used) to the professional RTK-Ag tests as well as the gold standard RT-PCR tests, it is still useful in picking up symptomatic cases, especially with the number of new cases being at an all-time high," he said.

In Parliament on Thursday, Tumpat MP Che Abdullah Mat Nawi said the government should no longer advise the public to use the Covid-19 self-test kits because the results are often inaccurate.

"If the self-test is not accurate, then it's better for the government to stop advising the public to use it. This is a big waste of money for consumers," he said.

Yesterday, in response to the PAS MP's comments, Universiti Sains Malaysia virologist Amir Yunus said that there are various factors why self-test kits may be inaccurate at times.

"While different kit manufacturers may have variations in the sensitivity of their products, the public must be aware that the accuracy of test results also depends on how well users themselves collect their samples," he told FMT.

He added that self-test kits also offer a much more affordable option for the public.

Amir urged those who are symptomatic to continue using self-test kits and to self-isolate, regardless of the results, in the interest of public health.

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