

Bulk purchases of self-test kits may cause shortage, panic buying

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Koh said some individuals do self-testing daily out of paranoia, but there is no necessity to do so. – SUNPIX

PETALING JAYA: The public should avoid buying Covid-19 self-test kits in bulk to avoid the possibility of a shortage.

With people getting worried about Covid-19, regular self-testing has become common, leading to the kits being in high demand.

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Malaysian Pharmacists Society president Amrahi Buang recently said the public should avoid doing self-tests unnecessarily to prevent shortage, adding that there is no need to do the test daily.

Muhammad Izham Jamaludin, a pharmacist in Klang, said those who buy in bulk are usually companies that provide the kits to their staff.

"A family usually buys about 10 to 20 kits for their household and companies usually purchase about 50 to 100," he told *theSun*.

He added that he does not impose a limit on purchases as there is adequate stock at his pharmacy and the kits are a necessary item during the pandemic.

According to Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Koh Kar Chai, the concern is that a shortage of test kits may lead to panic buying.

"With better understanding of the recommended testing frequency, I believe there would not be any shortage. If people follow recommendations from the Health Ministry on testing, it would not lead to hoarding of test kits.

"There are some individuals who are testing themselves every day due to paranoia, and these are the people who may buy in bulk," said Koh.

"I don't anticipate a shortage of supply as there are so many brands in the market. Due to high demand, manufacturers are ramping up production. Ultimately, the competition will benefit consumers as no single supplier can dictate pricing and supply."

Koh agrees with Amrahi that there is no reason to do the test daily, unless the individual is in a high-risk occupation such as working with Covid-19 patients or in a crowded place.

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“Even then, daily testing may not be needed. Follow the guidelines on the frequency of testing. At any rate, if there are symptoms, then it would be wise to test immediately using the antigen saliva self-test kit,” Koh said.

He added that if the test result is positive, the individual should immediately report it through the MySejahtera app to be assessed, as well as undergo a quarantine period and consult a doctor for further advice.

“Testing with self-test kit approved by the Medical Device Authority would be useful before attending events or visiting friends and family members who are not staying in the same house. For workplaces, practise social distancing and wear a face mask.”