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'BETTER TO WAIT'

'Pregnant, breastfeeding women should defer taking vaccine'

KUALA LUMPUR: Pregnant and breastfeeding women are advised to defer taking the Covid-19 Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to avoid any possible side effect.

Universiti Putra Malaysia's Medical Microbiology lecturer Associate Professor Dr Niazlin Mohd Taib said this was because there was no clinical evidence to support the use of the vaccine for the group.

"Pregnant mothers should not take a live virus vaccine and the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is a messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) vaccine that does not use the live virus.

"Although there should be no problem for pregnant and breastfeeding women to get the vaccine, since it is an mRNA vaccine, there is no clear data (on the use of the Covid-19 vaccine in pregnancy), including from Pfizer itself.

"It is better to wait first," she said on Bernama TV's *Koresponden* programme yesterday.

On allergic reactions that may arise from being vaccinated, she

said besides mRNA as its main active ingredient, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine also contained inactive chemicals, including polyethylene glycol (PEG,) which may cause allergies.

Niazlin said: "PEG is commonly used in food preservatives and sometimes in skincare products.

"What's important is that you must inform health officers about your allergies before getting vaccinated."

For those who have perennial allergies, Niazlin said it was important to take precautionary measures prior to getting the vaccine, adding that medical personnel were ready to attend to any emergency.

At the same time, she said, those with a history of a severe allergic reaction to vaccines were not encouraged to take the vaccine.

She said that people with very low immunity, including those on chemotherapy, would be excluded from getting the vaccine. **Bernama**



Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin yesterday observing Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba's demonstration of how the Covid-19 vaccine will be administered, at Putrajaya's National Cancer Institute. **BERNAMA PIC**

NATIONAL COVID-19 IMMUNISATION PROGRAMME

VACCINE REGISTRATION STARTS NEXT MONTH

Govt considering platforms for programme

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REGISTRATION to participate in the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme (PICK) is expected to be opened to the public next month.

Among the platforms being mulled to be used for the registration by the government is the MySejahtera application, public health facilities, www.vaksinocovid.gov.my website and a hotline, which will be announced in the near future.

Deputy Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Ahmad Amzad Mohamed @ Hashim said the government was also working to set up a special team to get people in rural areas to join PICK.

He said the government would set the date, place and location for recipients to receive the inoculation, and they would be informed via telephone, mail or other means.

Amzad said the Covid-19 Vac-

cine Supply Guarantee Special Committee would raise issues on the inoculation, such as possible scams and travel-related issues, which would be handled by the Communications and Multimedia Ministry.

"The history of the first or second dose vaccine injection of each recipient will be uploaded into the MySejahtera application," he told *Berita Harian*.

He said the hotline was expected to be launched before the second phase of the programme kicked off.

Amzad said after people had received the appointment date, they needed to go to a Vaccine Delivery Centre, undergo a consultation and fill in a permission form, before receiving the inoculation and confirmation receipt of the vaccine.

"They (individuals) need to get their temperature scanned, QR code and have their identities checked.

"They must also undergo observation for about 30 minutes after the injection and receive the vaccine card.

"The adverse event following immunisation (AEFI) will be monitored before the recipient is inoculated with the second dose, with the same cycle used for the next process."

The first phase, conducted be-

tween this month and April, would also be for frontline workers, including healthcare practitioners and security forces, involving about 500,000 people.

The second phase (April to August) would involve the elderly aged 65 and above, high-risk groups and the disabled, totalling 9.4 million people.

Phase three (May to February next year) would be for 13.7 million Malaysians and foreigners aged 18 and above.

The first batch of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine arrived here on Sunday. A total of 312,390 vaccine doses were flown in.

Amzad said the government planned to develop a vaccine passport as a confirmation document for those who had received the vaccine.

He said this would allow people to travel abroad in the future. "This is because some countries may require visitors to get a vaccine before being allowed to enter.

"Globally, there are people questioning steps in their countries to filter the influx of visitors after the international border is reopened.

"We are conducting discussions on this matter, and any decision made will be made known later."



Soldiers placing the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine in ultra-cold freezers at Tuanku Mizan Military Hospital in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. **PIC BY HAIRUL ANUAR RAHIM**