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# Pneumococcal vaccine plan to kick off

## Kids born from Jan 1 this year entitled to jabs under national immunisation programme

**PUTRAJAYA:** The national pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) programme against diseases like pneumonia and meningitis will kick off on Dec 1.

Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said children born from Jan 1 this year were entitled to pneumococcal vaccine jabs at the ministry's health clinics.

"Parents must make appointments at the health clinics to avoid congestion and to ensure compliance with new norms as part of the Covid-19 prevention efforts," he said in a statement.

With the addition of pneumococ-

cal vaccines into the National Immunisation Programme, there will be an adjustment in the immunisation schedule for children born after Jan 1, and who are aged five months and above.

Dr Noor Hisham said the vaccines would be given in three doses, comprising two primer doses at the age of four months and six months, followed by a booster dose at the age of 15 months.

The PCV helps prevent pneumococcal diseases such as pneumonia, sinusitis, meningitis and middle ear infections, which are caused by the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae*.

Dr Noor Hisham said giving the

vaccines to children could help reduce the morbidity and mortality rate among those aged five years and below.

"This will reduce the cost of treatment for pneumococcal disease and its complications.

"Although the pneumococcal disease can be treated with antibiotics, there are several strains of pneumococcus bacteria with resistance towards antibiotics.

"Giving pneumococcal vaccine is the most effective method to prevent pneumococcal bacterial infection, which in turn also reduces resistance to antibiotics," said Dr Noor Hisham.

The vaccine to be used under the first two years of the national programme is the PCV-10 (Synflorix) vaccine.

"The PCV-10 vaccine provides protection from 10 serotypes of pneumococcal bacteria, including serotypes 1, 4, 5, 6B, 7F, 9V, 14, 18C, 19F and 23F.

"It also gives cross-reactivity protection against serotype 19A," he said.

Dr Noor Hisham also gave his assurance that pneumococcal vaccines were "effective and safe", adding that according to the World Health Organisation, 156 countries had listed PCVs in their national

immunisation programmes.

"PCV has been used in private health facilities in Malaysia since 2009 and no serious safety issues have been reported through monitoring.

"However, under the National Immunisation Programme, it is a new vaccine utilised at the ministry's health clinics. The ministry will monitor each child for adverse effects after every injection dose," he said.

"Parents can report to the National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Division should their children experience any adverse effects."

## Another record-breaking day with 2,188 cases

**PUTRAJAYA:** Malaysia broke its own Covid-19 daily record for the second straight day after the country reported 2,188 new infections.

This surpasses the 1,882 Covid-19 cases recorded the previous day.

Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said a majority of the country's cases came from Selangor, which reported 1,623 new infections yesterday.

About 93% of the cases in the state came from the Teratai cluster (1,511 cases), which is linked to worker dormitories belonging to employees of manufacturer Top Glove.

Sabah, which was the epicentre of the country's third Covid-19 wave, continued to show a reduction in its daily cases with 232 new infections.

Perak recorded the third-highest number of new cases with 112.

Dr Noor Hisham said 107 of yesterday's cases were attributed to infection clusters related to prisons.

Of the 107 cases, 103 infections were from the Tembok cluster in Kedah, two cases were detected from the Seberang Perai prison cluster, while the Kepyayan prison cluster and the Sandakan prison cluster saw one case each.

There were no new infection clusters detected, with the number of active clusters now at 167.

Cumulatively, Malaysia's Covid-19 cases have reached 58,847.

On another note, Malaysia discharged 1,673 patients – the highest number of recoveries in a single day by far.

Previously, the record was 1,405 recoveries in one day, which was set on Nov 21. This brings the total number of Covid-19 recoveries in the country up to 44,153.

Active cases have gone up to 14,353, breaching the 14,000-mark for the first time.

Currently, 112 people are being treated at intensive care units, with 49 of them requiring ventilator support.

Dr Noor Hisham also announced four new deaths – three in Sabah and one in Penang.

The death in Penang involved an 84-year-old man, who has a history of high blood pressure and chronic lung disease.

The other cases involved a 41-year-old woman and a 74-year-old man who were treated at the Lahad Datu Hospital, as well as a 45-year-old non-Malaysian man at the Tawau Hospital.

Malaysia's Covid-19 death toll stands at 341 or 0.6% of total cases.



## Bosses must inform officials if any worker tests positive

By WANI MUTHIAH  
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**KLANG:** Factory and manufacturing plant operators must immediately inform the authorities when their employees test positive for Covid-19, said Selangor lawmakers.

This comes as some factories report Covid-19 cases among their workers.

"They must not try to settle the problem on their own and only inform the authorities when the situation gets out of hand," said Kapar MP Datuk Abdullah Sani Abdul Hamid.

He said the situation would get out of control if the authorities were not immediately informed.

"The right thing to do would be to

hand the premises over to the Health Department and other relevant authorities when even one person tests positive," he said.

Abdullah Sani expressed concern that local residents living near to hostels and dormitories could end falling sick due to the pandemic if this was not handled immediately and with the utmost urgency.

"This is because the locals in the surrounding areas frequent the same places such as restaurants, grocery shops and other facilities in the neighbourhood," he said.

Klang MP Charles Santiago said employers must ensure ample space for workers to practise social distancing at the workplace as well as in the hostels.

"There should not be any sharing

of beds and all workers must be given their own beds.

"Bathrooms must also not be shared by too many workers and kept very clean at all times," said Santiago.

He urged the Human Resources Ministry to come down hard on employers who did not meet the standards imposed on hostels and dormitories in line with protective measures initiated after the Covid-19 pandemic took root.

"The government has given specifications on how hostels and dormitories should be but employers have asked for some time.

"Enough time has been given and the government must ensure the formulated accommodation guidelines are implemented with imme-

diated effect," he added.

Santiago said it was time for the government to compel employers to look for new accommodation which would allow workers to effectively practise social distancing as required under the post-Covid-19 new norms.

"Workplaces must also have ample space so that workers are not forced to be in close proximity with each other," said Santiago.

Last month, 21 Nepali factory workers living at the Prima Bayu Apartments in Bayu Perdana here tested positive for Covid-19.

The factory, located in Port Klang, has rented seven units of the apartment to house 50 foreign workers.

Recently, latex medical glove manufacturer Top Glove reported

Covid-19 positive cases among its foreign workers.

Named the Teratai cluster, the company now has more than 1,000 Covid-19 positive cases.

Meru assemblyman Mohd Fakhruddin Mohd Mokhtar urged the authorities to completely stop all Top Glove operations at the Meru plant where workers had tested positive for Covid-19.

"They have to stop operations because we were informed some workers were allegedly sneaking out of their premises although they are bound by the enhanced movement control order," he said.

Fakhruddin claimed to have seen unverified pictures of such workers circulated by local residents on social media.