

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN  
MUKA SURAT : 11  
RUANGAN : KOMENTAR

# Peraturan ketat tangani penggunaan vape



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Sejak memasuki pasaran sekitar 2004, vape menyaingi rokok konvensional, tetapi awal-awal lagi ia dikritik hebat pakar perubatan dan pengkaji toksikologi.

Malah, ia semakin meruncing kerana dianggap mampu mengalahkan ketagihan pada rokok konvensional, manakala perantarnya dalam pelbagai bentuk, saiz dan cecair disalah guna dengan mencampurkan sebatian kimia, sekali gus menjadikan ramai ketagih serta berubah kepada dwipenggunaan, rokok dan vape serentak.

Justeru, risiko vape tidak dijangka dan mengakibatkan ketagihan dos nikotin lebih tinggi berikutan penggunaan rokok elektronik hampir sepanjang hari.

Penggunaan vape meningkat sangat ketara, daripada 9.8 peratus pada 2017 kepada 14.9 peratus (2022), termasuk remaja sekolah serta individu tidak merokok.

Malah, vape menjadi popular dari segi gaya hidup dan mencerminkan jiwa remaja, turut menarik minat wanita berikutan mengangapnya selamat, tiada nikotin dan selamat digunakan hingga menyebabkan peningkatan berlaku dalam kalangan remaja perempuan, daripada 2.8 peratus pada 2017 kepada 6.2 peratus (2022).

Sebahagian pengguna vape adalah perokok ingin mencari alternatif lebih sihat, tetapi sejauh manakah maksud 'sihat'?

Kandungan cecair vape mengandungi nikotin,

iaitu hasil tembakau yang menyebabkan ketagihan. Walaupun nikotinya lebih rendah daripada rokok, ia masih mendatangkan pelbagai kesan.

Nikotin akan melepaskan hormon dopamin membuatkan penghisap vape berasa 'gembira' tetapi apabila diambil pada jumlah tinggi, ia akan menyebabkan rasa ketagih melampau.

Ia juga memberikan impak kepada jantung pada jangka panjang yang menyebabkannya berdegup lebih kencang dan tekanan darah tinggi.

## Mengandungi bahan kimia berbahaya

Vape turut mengandungi bahan kimia berbahaya seperti benzana, komaun karsinogen dikenal pasti dapat mengakibatkan kanser darah dan gangguan pada fungsi tulang sumsum serta mampu meningkatkan risiko penyakit kardiovaskular.

Kandungan toluena pada penyedutan paras rendah pula boleh mengakibatkan kekeliruan, kelemahan, gangguan ingatan, loya dan gangguan pendengaran.

Penyedutan pada paras tinggi pula boleh menyebabkan pening kepala, mengantuk, tidak sedarkan diri serta perengsa kepada mata, kulit dan saluran pernafasan.

Pendedahan kepada plumbum boleh menyebabkan anemia, tekanan darah tinggi, kerosakan buah pinggang dan meninggalkan kesan toksik pada organ reproduktif.

Tahap pendedahan tinggi mengakibatkan serangan terhadap sistem saraf tunjang membawa kepada koma, sawan dan kematian. Pendedahan kanak-kanak kepada plumbum pula mengakibatkan gangguan tingkah laku.

Malah, ia turut memberi impak kepada individu

lain terhirup asap vape terutama ibu mengandung. Nikotin sedikit atau banyak tetap memberi impak bahaya pada golongan itu.

Kandungan bahan kimianya mampu memberi impak hingga janin, selain risiko kehamilan ektopik atau luar rahim dan mengakibatkan kelahiran bayi pramatang.

Kajian terhadap pelajar sarjana muda di universiti awam (UA) terpilih mendapati gejala kemurungan peringkat sederhana dan teruk adalah dalam lingkungan 13.9 hingga 29.3 peratus, gejala kebimbangan (51.5 hingga 55 peratus) dan gejala tekanan (12.9 hingga 21.6 peratus).

Kajian turut mengenal pasti tahap kesihatan pelajar menggunakan rokok konvensional dan rokok elektronik menerusi ujian saringan Depression, Anxiety & Stress (DASS) mengalami gejala kemurungan kedua-dua tahap itu sebanyak 28 peratus; kebimbangan (35.4 peratus) dan tekanan (15.7 peratus).

Kerajaan membelanjakan RM6.2 bilion bagi merawat pesakit berkaitan tabiat merokok pada 2020 dan dijangka meningkat hingga RM8.8 bilion menjelang 2030.

Bagi vape pula, Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) menganggarkan kos rawatan bagi penyakit berkaitan mencecah RM150,000 bagi tempoh 12 hari kemasukan ke wad, manakala 38 kes penyakit berkaitan penggunaan vape termasuk evali dilaporkan bagi tempoh 2022 hingga Disember 2023.

Justeru, dalam mengekang penggunaan vape, peraturan dan penguatkuasaan undang-undang ketat perlu dilakukan, manakala usaha menghentikan tabiat negatif itu perlu dilakukan daripada awal dan secara serius.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES  
MUKA SURAT : 5  
RUANGAN : NEWS / NATION

NEW COVID-19 SOP

# STAY-HOME ORDER REVOKED

Move among rules reviewed for transition to 'living with the virus' phase, says Dzulkefly

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INDIVIDUALS who test positive for Covid-19 will no longer be given home surveillance orders (HSO) and will be treated similarly with other respiratory infections.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad yesterday said the revocation of HSO was among standard operating procedures (SOP) and guidelines reviewed by the ministry in implementing its "Living with Covid-19" phase.

Previously, those tested posi-

tive for Covid-19 would have to observe a five-day HSO, starting from the onset of symptoms.

As for the issuance of medical leave certificates or referral to a hospital, Dr Dzulkefly said it was based on the assessment of the attending medical officer.

"Close contacts of Covid-19 positive cases are encouraged to monitor their own symptoms and health status.

"If symptoms persist or worsen, it is advised to visit nearby healthcare facilities (government or private) for assessment and further treatment," he said in a parliamentary reply to Datuk Dr Ahmad Yunus Hairi (PN-Kuala Langat) published on Thursday.

Yunus was inquiring about the preparations by the ministry given the recent increase in cases of Covid-19 in Singapore.

Dr Dzulkefly said those tested positive for Covid-19 still had the potential to spread the virus.

"Therefore, as a social responsibility, they are encouraged to

stay at home or in their residence.

"If they must go out, they should avoid close contact with others and consistently adhere to public health control and prevention measures.

"If symptoms persist or worsen, they should seek assessment and further treatment at nearby healthcare facilities."

Regarding the use of face masks, Dr Dzulkefly said healthcare workers, individuals with respiratory symptoms and those who tested positive for Covid-19 were still required to wear them, and the latter two should minimise their social interaction.

Meanwhile, regarding the recent increase of Covid-19 cases in Singapore, Dr Dzulkefly said that the ministry had bolstered its preparedness to address the potential rise of cases in Malaysia.

"The ministry has a monitoring method known as Heightened Alert System (HAS), which has been in place since the early stages of the pandemic and con-

tinues to be used today.

"Three indicators monitored under HAS are Covid-19 transmission, case management and hospital capacity for response."

Dr Dzulkefly said the ministry had also enhanced its screening and management of diseases with pandemic potential at the country's entry points.

"We try to provide accurate information to the public regarding pandemic developments and adopt a comprehensive approach to risk communication and community engagement.

"We are also enhancing the use of digital technology in delivering health services, tracking disease spread, contact tracing and monitoring infectious diseases," he said.

*Page 1 pic: A smartphone screen displaying a Home Surveillance Order issued via the MySejahtera app to a person who tested positive for Covid-19 in 2021.*

HSO removal the way forward, say experts

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Health experts say removal of the home surveillance order (HSO) for those who test positive for Covid-19 is the way forward.

Public health physician Datuk Dr Zainal Ariffin Omar said the quarantine system was no longer needed as Covid-19 was now in an endemic phase.

He added that a bundled quarantine system was non-productive for the country and it should be applied only for serious cases.

Similarly, Professor Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh, a public health expert from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, agreed that vaccination had provided good protection against the virus.

"For those who have already been vaccinated, they are relatively healthy.

"For those who are infected with no vaccination, when they engage with the public (mostly vaccinated), it becomes passive immunity," she added.

AKHBAR : THE STAR  
MUKA SURAT : 3  
RUANGAN : NATION

# No more HSO from July 15

## MOH: Covid-19 positive patients no longer need to report to MySejahtera

By RAGANANTHINI  
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**PETALING JAYA:** The discontinuation of home surveillance order (HSO) for those with Covid-19 will come into effect on July 15, the Health Ministry said in a statement yesterday.

It also said that those who test positive will no longer be required to report their Covid-19 self-test results to MySejahtera.

"Just like other countries in the world, Malaysia has been facing the Covid-19 pandemic since 2020.

"After more than four years of facing the Covid-19 pandemic with several measures to contain it, the country is now in a good position and is ready to move to the living with Covid-19 phase," the ministry said.

The ministry will continue to monitor the latest Covid-19 situation in the global and Malaysian stage.

The Heightened Alert System (HAS), which was used to monitor the Covid-19 situation from the early stage of the pandemic, is still in use to this day.

The number of infections dropped 77.9% to 3,810 last week

compared to 17,256 in the first week of the year.

No new variants have been detected in Malaysia.

The variants currently found in the country are the Omicron and its sub-variants.

Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Dr Azizan Abdul Aziz said the World Health Organisation (WHO) had also declared that Covid-19 is no longer a public health emergency and global threat.

"However, Covid-19 can still cause severe symptoms in older persons and those with comorbid conditions," she said.

Meanwhile, health experts have welcomed the decision to discontinue with HSO citing evolving circumstances where some standard operating procedures (SOP) may no longer be relevant.

Universiti Putra Malaysia's public health medicine expert Prof Dr Malina Osman said the move was timely as quarantine orders were no longer essential.

"We have to treat Covid-19 like other immunisable diseases.

"Some of the pandemic measures may no longer be relevant," she said.

Public health expert Datuk Dr

Zainal Ariffin Omar supported the decision, noting the high vaccination coverage and milder infections.

"Currently, Covid-19 is endemic and the disease is quite similar to the common flu," he said, adding that maintaining excessive quarantine measures might not be productive.

Authorities should, however, continue surveillance to detect any serious new variants early, Dr Zainal said.

He added that there might also be a risk of false security among the public due to decreased testing.

# M'sian school bags US\$100,000 in regional health meet

By JAAYNE JEEVITA  
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**NUSA DUA:** SK Putrajaya Presint 11(1) has been named the "healthiest" among more than 2,000 primary and secondary schools across the region to bag the grand prize of US\$100,000 (RM470,746).

The primary school in Putrajaya was crowned champion at the AIA Healthiest Schools (AHS) Regional Awards ceremony on Thursday night in Bali, Indonesia, for its innovative Helpie health mobile application.

The app was designed to improve students' mental well-being by offering tools for stress identification and management, as well as fun games and health campaigns.

The project yielded impressive results, with over 500 students experiencing a drop in stress levels – from 34% to 18% – while 92% of the students reported better emotional understanding.

Teacher and Helpie project lead Mohd Saharudin Setapa said the award is a recognition of the team's hard work.

"We will try to sustain this project using the prize money, and hopefully expand it to other countries so that we can encourage better mental health and well-be-



**All smiles:** (From left) AIA Malaysia corporate communications manager Tunku Faradiana Tunku Zainal Abidin, Suzana, Mohd Saharudin, SK Putrajaya Presint 11(1) headmistress Norzah Mohd Kassim, AIA Malaysia brand and communications director Asha Nair and SMK Convent Butterworth principal Lim Lean Yolk at the awards ceremony.

ing in students everywhere.

"Words can't even describe the happiness I feel right now. I'm so overwhelmed," he said, adding that though his pupils were not present at the ceremony, they would definitely be overjoyed at the good news.

"I would like to thank the prin-

cipal, parents and students for all their contribution and support for this project," he said.

A total of 2,376 primary and secondary schools from Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong, Australia, and Vietnam participated in the 2023/24 AHS programme.

Na Sang Semi-Boarding Primary School for Ethnic Minorities No. 1 and Victory Experimental Secondary School from Vietnam received honourable mentions for their "Happy Schools" and "Going to School is Happiness" initiatives, respectively.

Praising Malaysia's project as "very impressive", AIA Group chief marketing officer Stuart A. Spencer said it addressed a crucial issue, as mental health problems have surged in children and adults since the Covid-19 pandemic, yet there was a lack of adequate attention and resources to address them.

"We're trying to help stimulate a change to encourage more people to reach out for mental health assistance and we think the submission from SK Putrajaya Presint 11(1) in Malaysia was terrific," he said.

On June 19, during the inaugural AHS national-level competition in Kuala Lumpur, SK Putrajaya Presint 11(1) and SMK Convent Butterworth received US\$13,000 (RM61,213) each for coming out on top in their respective categories of the challenge.

Both schools then went on to represent Malaysia, competing against five other participating countries in Asia-Pacific.

SMK Convent Butterworth senior assistant of student affairs Suzana Khamis, who showcased the school's Eco-Jump Rope and Dumbbell, said they were proud of their project and happy that they had managed to compete regionally.

The project fosters fitness and sustainability, promoting creativity and teamwork and a greener lifestyle among students.

Endorsed by the Education Ministry, the AHS programme is designed to encourage healthy living habits among students aged five to 16 by promoting healthy eating, active lifestyles, and mental well-being, as well as health and sustainability in schools.

The programme also provides free downloadable resources that will equip teachers to effectively introduce health and well-being concepts into their classrooms.

In his speech, Spencer said the AHS competition aligns closely with their mission to foster impactful, sustainable behaviour change for healthier living.

"We are proud of how the competition is scaling and empowering the next generation to make healthy choices and drive meaningful change in communities across Asia," he said.