



PRESS STATEMENT MINISTRY OF HEALTH MALAYSIA

UPDATES ON THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19) SITUATION IN MALAYSIA

Current Status of Confirmed COVID-19 Cases Who Have Recovered

24 March 2020 – The Ministry of Health (MOH) would like to inform that **24 cases** have fully recovered and discharged well today. Cumulatively, 183 confirmed COVID-19 cases have fully recovered and discharged well.

Current Situation of COVID-19 in Malaysia

24 March 2020, 12 pm – A total of **106 additional confirmed COVID-19 cases** were reported to the National Crisis Preparedness and Response Centre (CPRC) MOH today. Cumulatively there are now **1,624 confirmed COVID-19 cases** in Malaysia. Based on preliminary investigation, of these 106 additional confirmed cases, 43 cases are related to the *Tabligh* gathering in Seri Petaling mosque. Investigations are still on-going for the remaining of 63 cases.

Currently, **64 confirmed COVID-19 cases are receiving treatment in intensive care units (ICU)**, and of these, 27 cases are on ventilation support.

Regretfully, one (1) additional COVID-19 death was reported to the National CPRC MOH today. Cumulatively, there are now 15 COVID-19 deaths in Malaysia:

1. **Death #15:** Case 1,519 is a 70 year-old Malaysian man. He has a history of diabetes and hypertension and suspected to have close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case (Case 703) during Friday prayers. He had a history of fever and cough for one week, and difficulty breathing for three days. He was admitted into Sultanah Fatimah Hospital, Muar on 18 March 2020. His condition deteriorated and he was given ventilation support in ICU. He was pronounced dead on 24 March 2020 at 5.35 am.

MOH conveys condolences to his family members.

Tests for COVID-19 Detection

Laboratory tests conducted at government health laboratory facilities for COVID-19 use the Real-Time Reverse Transcription-Polymerase Chain Reaction (rRT-PCR) technique. The rRT-PCR test will detect the presence of the COVID-19 virus in the patient's body. Therefore, a positive COVID-19 rRT-PCR test means that the individual has been infected. Accurate test results through rRT-PCR techniques are crucial in the effective management of COVID-19 patients.

Meanwhile, the rapid test kit (RTK) now available in the market detects antibodies produced by the body in response to the infection. Antibodies usually appear in the body about 5 to 8 days after infection. RTK tests are **not able to detect the virus** and provide early confirmation of the infection. As such, it is not useful in the early detection of COVID-19 cases, and antibody-based RTK is not recommended for the diagnosis of COVID-19.

Therefore, MOH urges the public not to take the RTK test unnecessarily. RTK tests conducted without counselling by a Medical Practitioner have the potential to cause misinterpretation of the test results and thus cause undue anxiety.

Health Advisory on COVID-19

MOH advises the public to remain at home for the duration of enforcement of the Movement Control Order. The public must continue to practice social distancing of at least 1 metre from other individuals. The public is also encouraged to do indoor activities with family members.

MOH wishes to reiterate that Malaysians should not put the blame on the *Tabligh* members. Do not discriminate against the *Tabligh* members. Do not stigmatise the *Tabligh* members. Instead, it is important for Malaysians to assist in finding and treating COVID-19 infection amongst the *Tabligh* members, their families, friends and contacts.

MOH is also collaborating with MERCY Malaysia in providing psychosocial support services to all Malaysians. Therefore, all front-liners and individuals emotionally affected by COVID-19 can access the service through these following telephone numbers:

011-63996482 / 011-63994236 / 03-29359935

The operating hours for this psychosocial support services are from 8.00 am to 5.00 pm daily. This service is managed by MOH's psychology team and MERCY Malaysia volunteers.

If unwell, please contact the Virtual Health Advisory for advice, and join the webinar session that is held daily starting at 9:00 am via the following link:

<http://www.doctoroncall.com.my/coronavirus>

The public can also contact the National CPRC MOH hotline. Further information on the COVID-19 situation in Malaysia is also available through the National CPRC MOH Telegram channel <https://t.me/cprckm>.

MOH will continue to monitor the development of the COVID-19 situation based on all available information, and the public will be continuously updated on the latest information.

Thank you.

Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah
Director General of Health Malaysia

24 March 2020 @ 5.00 pm

Appendix 1

Number of Confirmed COVID-19 Cases in Malaysia, by States (Cumulative, as of 24 March 2020, 12 pm)

State	No. of New Cases	Cumulative
Perlis	0	9
Kedah	5	64
Pulau Pinang	2	68
Perak	17	98
Selangor	27	381
Negeri Sembilan	15	109
Melaka	6	31
Johor	4	162
Pahang	0	56
Terengganu	0	38
Kelantan	7	78
Sabah	1	170
Sarawak	5	83
WP Kuala Lumpur	15	257
WP Putrajaya	2	15
WP Labuan	0	5
Total	106	1,624