



KUALA LUMPUR: High-risk senior citizens will not be forced to take a second booster shot, says Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin.

He said that these individuals would be given a choice whether or not to take the additional protection against severe Covid-19 symptoms.

"This is a choice, the Health Ministry (MOH) can only recommend (it). Don't say I am forcing... I just want to ensure our senior citizens get the best protection, especially when they all 'balik kampung' later," he said via a video clip lasting two minutes and 20 seconds on his Twitter account on Monday (April 18).

Khairy said the MOH has also started using the antiviral drug Paxlovid as a therapeutic to treat high-risk Covid-19 patients.

He said the antiviral drug was aimed at treating patients and not as a substitute vaccine, adding that the MOH would purchase more of the drug.

The Health Minister said professional RTK-Ag tests supervised via virtual consultation are now allowed to facilitate the public to conduct such tests.

"If there is a need to conduct professional RTK tests, they can be done via live video, and you can get your test result through email, for example. Medical practitioners can offer this service to the public," he said.

Apart from that, he said recipients of Sinovac and Sinopharm primary vaccines and who will be travelling to countries that do not recognise these vaccines could get other vaccines as their second booster dose by applying via the MySejahtera application or via walk-in at vaccination centres.

He said further details regarding vaccination centres that are still operational could be found on the website www.protecthealth.com.my.

For teenagers with a weak immune system or immunocompromised, Khairy said this group too could now obtain the booster dose.

"Please check with your physician for booster details. This is important because there is a slight increase in (Covid-19) cases among teenagers. So, for this group, you can take the booster shot to stay safe," he said.

Khairy said he would announce the latest development with regard to the Hari Raya Aidilfitri celebration, as well as several other announcements, next week. - Bernama