

Masks off: Malaysians hesitant over new decision

By Qistina Sallehuddin - September 7, 2022 @ 7:13pm



Many Malaysians are not ready to take off their face masks indoors, despite today's decision by the Health Ministry to make it optional. - NSTP/AIZUDDIN SAAD

KUALA LUMPUR: Many Malaysians are not ready to take off their face masks indoors, despite today's decision by the Health Ministry to make it optional.

Checks by the New Straits Times revealed that the public is still hesitant to take their masks off, describing the decision as worrying and concerning.

Marketing senior executive Alani Sorfina Zainudin said the lifting of the mask mandate indoors was too soon following the unpredictable number of Covid-19 cases reported daily.

"As the number of Covid-19 cases reported daily is inconsistent, I believe that the mandate should not be scrapped by government.

"If anything, further studies should be conducted to prove that lifting the mask mandate is effective in curbing the spread of new infections," she said, adding that the public should opt to wear masks indoors to reduce the spread of the virus.

Echoing the same worry, Hazel Hanif, 24, said the government should consider lifting the mandate given that many buildings have limited ventilation.

"I don't think we should lift the mask mandate indoors, especially if we want to protect those whose jobs revolve around serving other people, such as restaurant workers.

"The mandate should be lifted when most of us are more responsible in dealing with Covid-19.

"It is evident there are still those who do not have common sense and are quite selfish even after entering our third year since the outbreak began," she said.

The view was supported by public relations consultant Ana Nabila Amin, 24, who urged the people to be more responsible by taking extra measures when meeting others indoors.

"I've seen a lot of people not wearing masks even when they are required to wear them in certain places. I do hope that the public will take safety precautions, especially when they meet those who are in the high risk group," she said.

Describing the new mandate as "tricky", Laila Faqisya Shah, 29, said the lifting of mask mandate indoors could either benefit or harm the people.

"It's difficult to say because you are exposed to the possibility of getting infected, but you also want life to return to pre-Covid times, but I am sure the government has done a thorough study on this and is sure everything is under control," she said.

Earlier, Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin announced that the wearing of face masks in enclosed spaces is optional, effective today.

However, it will remain mandatory in public transportation such as buses, airplanes, at health facilities and care centres.

He also mentioned that premises owners can impose the wearing of face masks on those seeking to enter and spend time in their establishments to curb the spread of the virus.

Despite the lifting of the restriction, he said the people were advised to keep their masks on as it stops the spread of Covid-19.