

# 'KIDNEY PATIENTS SHOULD GET JAB FAST'

Number of chronic kidney disease patients may hit 106,000 by 2040, says Health D-G

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**H**EALTH director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah yesterday called on chronic kidney disease (CKD) patients to register for the Covid-19 vaccination programme.

In his address at the virtual World Kidney Day celebration yesterday, Dr Noor Hisham said people, especially CKD patients, should register for inoculation immediately.

The National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme was rolled

out on Feb 26, with the first two recipients of the vaccine being Dr Noor Hisham and Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

Dr Noor Hisham reiterated the Health Ministry's concern about the rising number of CKD patients.

He said there were 40,000 CKD patients undergoing dialysis nationwide.

"A total of 8,000 new patients were detected in 2018 and the trend is increasing every year.

"Should this continue, the number of patients requiring dialysis is estimated to reach 106,000 by 2040."

He said the most worrying factor was that 30 per cent of patients who require dialysis were below age 45.

He said the nephrologist services department of the ministry, as well as the Malaysian Society

of Nephrology and the National Kidney Foundation (NKF), would intensify efforts to educate people on kidney ailments.

"These include the importance of periodic screening, early prevention and fostering a sense of responsibility and involvement during the treatment stage."

NKF director Datuk Dr Zaki Morad Mohamad Zaher called on the public to undergo periodic health screenings for early detection of ailments.

He said symptoms related to the disease would not be apparent in the early stages.

"Symptoms become apparent only when about 90 per cent of kidney function is lost."

Kuala Lumpur Hospital nephrologist Dr Wan Hazlina Wan Mohamad said symptoms of kidney failure would be visible only when the organ was functioning



Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah



Datuk Dr Zaki Morad Mohamad Zaher

at less than 15 per cent.

She said most patients would not experience any symptom for years until a screening was done.

"Usually, patients will be informed about their health status only when they go through a full medical check-up before they start a new job or continue their studies.

"Symptoms include swollen feet, puffy face, frequent urinating, especially during the night, or lack of urine, fatigue, appetite loss, nausea and vomiting, foamy urine and shortness of breath. These could lead to a coma."

She said diabetes was the main cause of kidney failure in the country.

"Other than diabetes, which is also the country's top diagnosed condition, other diseases that contribute to kidney failure are high

blood pressure, obesity, kidney inflammation, kidney stones, smoking, taking painkillers without a doctor's prescription and family medical history."

She advised people to take good care of their kidneys by practising healthy eating, exercising and monitoring their weight.

"Many Malaysians cannot avoid having rice. But what we can do is to practise a balanced diet and control your food.

"Forget about sugary drinks and food that are high in calories or sodium. Instead, try having more fresh vegetables and

chicken in your diet, seasoned naturally with black pepper or curry powder."

She said smoking and taking drugs, including medication that could poison the kidneys, should be avoided.